



Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 9

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 9

3rd Session
41st Parliament

Monday
9 April 2018

3^e session
41^e législature

Lundi
9 avril 2018

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

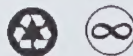
Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



ISSN 1180-2987

Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 9 April 2018 / Lundi 9 avril 2018

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Bill Mauro	371
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	371
Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers	371
Hon. Marie-France Lalonde	371
Mr. James J. Bradley	371
Mr. Granville Anderson	371
Mme Gila Martow	371
Mme France Gélinas	371
Ms. Sophie Kiwala	371
Ms. Catherine Fife	371
Mrs. Cristina Martins	371
Hon. Charles Sousa	371
L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde	371
Hon. Daiene Vernile	371
Ms. Peggy Sattler	371
Mrs. Cristina Martins	372
L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde	372

Accident in Humboldt, Saskatchewan

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	372
------------------------------	-----

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Executive compensation

Mr. Victor Fedeli	372
Hon. Glenn Thibeault	372

Provincial debt

Mr. Victor Fedeli	373
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	373

Dental care

Ms. Andrea Horwath	374
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	374

Dental care

Ms. Andrea Horwath	375
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	375
Hon. Helena Jaczek	375

Teachers' collective bargaining

Mr. Lorne Coe	375
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	376

Hospital funding

Mme France Gélinas	376
Hon. Helena Jaczek	376

Public libraries

Mrs. Cristina Martins	377
Hon. Daiene Vernile	377

Member's comments

Mr. Randy Hillier	377
Hon. Charles Sousa	377

Dental care

Mr. John Vanthof	378
Hon. Helena Jaczek	378

Broadband infrastructure

Ms. Sophie Kiwala	378
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	379
Hon. Jeff Leal	379

Fire safety

Mr. Randy Pettapiece	379
Hon. Marie-France Lalonde	379

Environmental protection

Mr. Peter Tabuns	380
Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers	380

Indigenous children and youth

Mr. Arthur Potts	380
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	380
Hon. David Zimmer	381

Hospital funding

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	381
Hon. Helena Jaczek	381

Consumer protection

Mr. Wayne Gates	381
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	382

Notices of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	382
-------------------------------------	-----

Speaker's birthday

Mr. Arthur Potts	382
------------------------	-----

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Hockey

Mr. Monte McNaughton	382
----------------------------	-----

Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Communities

Ms. Jennifer K. French	382
------------------------------	-----

Battle of Vimy Ridge

Mr. Arthur Potts	383
------------------------	-----

Rick Lund

Mr. Norm Miller	383
-----------------------	-----

Accident in Humboldt, Saskatchewan

Mr. Wayne Gates	383
-----------------------	-----

Oncology Nursing Day

Mr. John Fraser	384
-----------------------	-----

Organ and tissue donation	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	384
Ontario budget	
Mr. James J. Bradley	384
Battle of Vimy Ridge	
Mr. Bill Walker	384
Use of prop in the House	
Ms. Soo Wong	385
Battle of Vimy Ridge	
Mr. Arthur Potts	385

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act, 2018, Bill 36, Ms. Wong / Loi de 2018 sur le Jour commémoratif du massacre de Nanjing, projet de loi 36, Mme Wong	
First reading agreed to	385
Ms. Soo Wong	385

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Fish and wildlife management	
Mr. Bill Walker	385
Mental health services	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	386
Health care funding	
Mr. Norm Miller	386
Bombardier lands	
Mme France Gélinas	386
Ontario Drug Benefit Program	
Mr. Arthur Potts	387
Mental health services	
Mr. Jeff Yurek	387
Correctional services	
Ms. Jennifer K. French	387
Animal protection	
Mr. Han Dong	387
Accident benefits	
Mr. Jeff Yurek	388
Injured workers	
Miss Monique Taylor	388
Government services	
Mme France Gélinas	388

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Pay Transparency Act, 2018, Bill 3, Mr. Flynn / Loi de 2018 sur la transparence salariale, projet de loi 3, M. Flynn	
Mr. Bill Walker	389
Ms. Peggy Sattler	392

Mrs. Liz Sandals	393
Mr. Randy Hillier	393
Mme France Gélinas	393
Mr. Bill Walker	393
Ms. Jennifer K. French	394
Hon. Dipika Damerla	396
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	397
Ms. Peggy Sattler	397
Hon. Chris Ballard	397
Ms. Jennifer K. French	397
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	398
Mr. Jim McDonell	399
Ms. Peggy Sattler	399
Hon. Laura Albanese	399
Mr. Bill Walker	400
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	400
Mr. Monte McNaughton	401
Miss Monique Taylor	404
Hon. Daiene Vernile	404
Mr. Toby Barrett	404
Ms. Peggy Sattler	404
Mr. Monte McNaughton	405
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	405
Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018, Bill 6, Mrs. Lalonde / Loi de 2018 sur la transformation des services correctionnels, projet de loi 6, Mme Lalonde	
Mr. Taras Natyshak	405
Ms. Soo Wong	412
Mr. Norm Miller	412
Mr. Percy Hatfield	412
Mr. Jim McDonell	413
Mr. Taras Natyshak	413
Ms. Soo Wong	413
Mr. Jim McDonell	416
Mr. Percy Hatfield	416
Ms. Sophie Kiwala	417
Mr. Bill Walker	417
Ms. Soo Wong	417
Mr. Randy Hillier	418
Mr. Paul Miller	420
Ms. Soo Wong	420
Mr. Jim McDonell	420
Mr. John Vanthof	421
Mr. Randy Hillier	421
Ms. Catherine Fife	421
Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers	424
Mr. Jeff Yurek	424
Mr. Taras Natyshak	424
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	425
Ms. Catherine Fife	425
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	425

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 9 April 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 9 avril 2018

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I ask everyone to please join in the singing of the Canadian national anthem.

Singing of O Canada.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'd like to welcome four students from the Ontario Medical Students Association—I'll be meeting with them this afternoon: Josée Malette from Thunder Bay, Northern Ontario School of Medicine; Grace Zhao from the University of Toronto; Mallory Jackman from London, University of Western Ontario; and Alexandra Kilian from Hamilton, McMaster.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: For Cindy Forster, MPP for Welland, I would like to introduce page Amelia Wendling and her father, Kevin Wendling. He will be here in the gallery this morning. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: I'd like to introduce some students from the Ontario Medical Students Association—I will be meeting with them this afternoon: Sam Seyedin, who lives in the beautiful riding of Ottawa-Vanier; Julia Shen, who studies at the University of Ottawa; Maham Bushra; and Andy Zeng.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure to welcome the mother of one of our employees, one of my staff in our office: Madame Vesna Milevska, who is here this morning watching question period. We welcome her to Queen's Park.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I'd like to welcome today to the Legislative Assembly Julien Lu, Andréanne Chaumont, Jonathan Tebbi and Jamie Riggs, medical students who I'll be meeting with later today.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'd like to welcome Sophie Hamilton, who is starting today as a legislative page from my great riding of Durham.

Also, I'd like to welcome another constituent of mine, Charlotte Fuller, who is here today with the Ontario Medical Students Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je veux donner un très grand accueil à Peter Hominuk et aussi Carol Jolin de « mon assemblée ». La fille de Peter, Émilie Hominuk, est une page avec nous. Alors, bienvenue à Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Moi aussi, j'aimerais souligner la présence de Peter Hominuk, Carol Jolin et Stewart Kiff, qui sont ici dans la galerie aujourd'hui pour l'annonce du premier conseil des gouverneurs de l'université franco. Bienvenue.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to welcome the Ontario medical students from my riding of Kingston and the Islands: Julia Lew, Lia Mesbah-Oskui and Avrilynn Ding. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm happy to introduce my Girls' Government group from Vista Hills Public School: teacher Ms. Kristin Rahian, and students Jolie Diederik, Shengyu Gao, Tulja Gobburu, Mitraa Nazikar, Amelia Smith, Izzy St. Pierre, Kate Woo, Michelle Xu and Zillin Ye—you can see this is a very multicultural school, right, Mr. Speaker?

I'm also happy to introduce Iris Bednarski from Kitchener Collegiate Institute, who is also joining us today, and Carly Pettinger, my constituency assistant from Waterloo.

Lastly, I would like to introduce the folks from the University of Waterloo Federation of Students: Andrew Clubine, Hannah Beckett, Jennifer Chen and Maya Venters. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure to introduce this morning a number of grade 10 and 11 international students from Bloor Collegiate Institute in my riding of Davenport, and to welcome their teachers, Matthew Douglas and Fatima Zahid. Welcome to Queen's Park, students.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Sheila Carneiro and her daughter, Claudia. They're here to support the Interim Place women's shelter in south Mississauga. Welcome to Queen's Park.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Ça me fait bien plaisir d'accueillir en Chambre, à titre de députée d'Ottawa-Orléans, un page qu'on a ici, Maxime Dufault, qui va partager le temps avec nous dans les prochaines semaines, et aussi son papa, François Dufault, qui est dans la galerie. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Hon. Daiene Vernile: I'm delighted to welcome to Queen's Park today the family of Colin Robinson, who is serving as our page captain. We have joining us his mother, Brooke Robinson, and sister Taylor Robinson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd also like to welcome Andrew Clubine to Queen's Park, who, in addition to being involved with the University of Waterloo Feds, is also the president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I too want to welcome all of the students who are visiting us here today from the Ontario Medical Students Association, in particular the students I will be meeting with this afternoon: Adrina Zhong, Judy Truong, Lia Mesbah-Oskui, who lives in my riding of Davenport, and Priya Dhir, who goes to school in Davenport. Welcome to the students.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Écoutez, ce matin, tel que mentionné, on a nommé le premier conseil des gouverneurs. J'aimerais reconnaître la présence, dans la galerie, des jeunes de la FESFO qui sont avec nous, et aussi de l'AFO. On a mentionné leurs noms. Je les félicite et je les remercie beaucoup de leur engagement communautaire.

1040

ACCIDENT IN HUMBOLDT, SASKATCHEWAN

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence before question period as a sign of this House's condolences for the victims of the devastating Humboldt Broncos bus crash in Saskatchewan this weekend.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier is seeking unanimous consent for a moment's silence. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask everyone in the House to please rise to observe a moment of silence in respect of the deceased.

The House observed a moment's silence.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

Premier, one of these CEO salaries is not like the others:

- Manitoba Hydro, \$466,000;
- SaskPower, \$481,000;
- BC Hydro, \$489,000;
- Quebec hydro, \$543,000;
- Hydro One, \$6.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier justify her "Six Million Dollar Man"?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It is very important that we acknowledge and recognize that executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority of Ontario salaries, and we remain committed to Hydro One's regulation, accountability and transparency through our government's involvement as a majority shareholder. That said,

Hydro One is now a publicly traded company, not a government entity.

Hydro One also reports that 80% of the company's CEO compensation is paid out only if aggressive performance targets are met, targets that lead to more affordable bills for customers.

Since broadening the ownership of Hydro One, the company's leadership has already made \$114 million in savings for their customers. These significant savings have been realized through enhancements to customer service and the company's commitment to lowering costs for the ratepayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Last year was a windfall for Hydro One execs. The millionaires' club is a sight to behold:

—the president and CEO, Mayo Schmidt, \$6.2 million, and that's after an increase, just this year alone, of \$1.7 million;

—the former CFO, \$1.2 million;

—the senior vice-president and acting CFO, just under \$1 million.

The COO made \$2.1 million, one executive vice-president made \$2 million, and another, \$1.9 million.

This is outrageous, Speaker. They all make more money than the CEOs of any other hydro company.

While the average family struggles to make ends meet, how does the Premier justify paying her millionaires' club?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, Hydro One's rates continue to be set by the Ontario Energy Board, and when taking this into consideration—the board is the energy sector's independent regulator, with a mandate to protect the province's electricity consumers, and it continues to deliver on its mandate. For instance, last fall, the board capped the portion of executive compensation at Hydro One for electricity customers. They're required to fund that at 10% of base salaries, saving ratepayers \$30 million over this year and next.

We understand that affordability is critical for families and businesses, which is why we launched the fair hydro plan, which reduced rates by 25%, on average, for all residential customers and as many as half a million small businesses and farms.

Once again, it is important to emphasize that this salary is only paid if aggressive performance targets are met, targets that lead to more affordable bills for ratepayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: I can't believe this government is defending this. The Premier once said, "Any decision of that ... magnitude would require a two-thirds majority of the Hydro One board of directors, which means that having 40% ownership protects us." She added, "With 40% ownership of the board, that would require that the people of Ontario have a say."

She went one step further, Speaker, and said, "Will there be the ability of the government to retain control

over major decisions because of that 40% ownership? Yes, Mr. Speaker.” That means, Speaker, the Premier is responsible for these outrageous salaries. How can the Premier be trusted when she is signing off on the \$6-million salary?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, we recognize that these executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority of Ontario salaries, and we remain committed to Hydro One’s regulation and accountability and transparency through our government’s involvement as a majority shareholder, Mr. Speaker.

But let’s look at what the opposition is claiming. They’re claiming they’re concerned about lowering electricity bills, but when it came time for them to take action, what did they do? They voted against the fair hydro plan. Now, because they don’t support fighting climate change, they’ll have to cut billions in programs that Ontarians count on every single day. They’ll have to cut programs like free child care, like OHIP+, like free tuition or dental and prescription coverage.

Unlike their half-baked scheme, Ontarians know that we have a plan to increase fairness and create more opportunity. We’ll continue to do that for the people of Ontario. We’ll continue to act to make sure we’ve got their best interests at heart.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In this round of questions, you’ve asked me to put warnings on, and I shall. We’re in warnings.

New question.

PROVINCIAL DEBT

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. The member from Mississauga–Streetsville is proud of this government’s debt. He specifically said, “We have tripled”—referring to the debt—“and we’re proud of it....”

The people of Ontario want to know if the Premier shares these sentiments. Mr. Speaker, is the Premier proud that she has saddled our grandchildren with her debt?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, let me just talk about the plan that we have been implementing and that we are going to continue to build on as we bring our budget forward.

What we know is that there are people across this province, whether it’s a family with a teenager who’s looking for mental health challenges—and I know that the Girls’ Government group is going to be talking about mental health today—whether it’s a young mom who wants to get back into work but can’t find child care that she can afford, or whether it’s someone working in a minimum wage job who, today, has more money in his pocket—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Mayo Schmidt isn’t in a minimum wage job.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —because minimum wage is now \$14 an hour and will go to \$15 an hour. Those are the people we are fighting for, Mr. Speaker. That is the care we know is needed in this province, and that is what we are proud of.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: What we do know is that this government has put our province’s future in doubt. In no way at all is tripling the debt a responsible thing to do. Ontario has the highest debt of any province or state on the entire planet, Speaker. This is crowding out the services we all depend on, like health care and education, which is why this Premier fired 1,600 nurses and closed 600 schools—more than any other government in the history of our province. This debt is putting an unfair burden on our children and grandchildren. The government’s debt is the reason they cut services, instead of caring about families.

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite knows that we’ve built 800 schools, and he knows that we’ve renovated another 780.

The reality is that if we do not make these investments in people, then we will be in a situation where our economy will not continue to grow.

We have balanced the budget this year. We’ve made investments in infrastructure across the province. And we know that at this moment what is needed in Ontario is an investment in people—an investment in their care, an investment in giving them the tools so that they can care for themselves and they can care for their families.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is standing up for a party that has promised that they will cut billions out of education, billions out of health care and billions out of services to people in this province. That’s not our plan—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

The member from Nepean–Carleton is warned.

And I do know that someone in a certain area did say something unparliamentary. If I actually knew exactly who it was, I’d ask them to withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I’m not playing.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Well, the people are disappointed that making up stories for political gain seems to be the new approach of the Premier.

Quite frankly, we are shocked that this Premier is defending the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. What else does she defend from this member? He has advocated for higher taxes on hard-working families. On his website, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville called on the federal government to raise the GST by 1%. He wrote: “The feds” should “restore one percentage point of the GST, removed during the previous decade,

raising it to 6%....” Mr. Speaker, does the Premier support the member’s statement on new taxes as well? Is she going to be calling on Prime Minister Trudeau to raise the GST?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I invite the member opposite to read our budget, Mr. Speaker. I invite the member opposite to look at the policies that we’re putting in place. I invite the member opposite to talk to the people in his community who are looking for child care, who are looking for mental health services—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and who are working at minimum wage. I invite the member opposite to talk to those people and ask them their thoughts on getting more support.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this party is capable of cutting billions out of the public service, out of education, out of health care. They’ve done it before, and they would do it again. We’re not going to stand for that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services is warned.

New question.

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

The Premier seems to think that children’s dental care costs \$50 a year, because that’s how much is in her Liberal budget to look after kids’ teeth. I haven’t heard of many dentists’ offices that will clean a child’s teeth, do an X-ray, a checkup, maybe fill a cavity for 50 bucks. If she has, I know a lot of parents will want that phone number.

Does the Premier know any dentist who will actually look after a child’s teeth for 50 bucks, and will she give out that telephone number to the parents of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I actually have no quarrel with the leader of the third party that there needs to be support for families in this province for dental care and pharmacare. We recognize that. We put in place OHIP+. And for years, we’ve been working on the Healthy Smiles Ontario program, on expanding it.

There are 450,000 kids who access important dental services through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program, so this is not a new issue for us. This is something that we have been working on, that we recognize needs more work.

I’m very happy that the leader of the third party is now coming onside and is concerned about this.

We will continue to work with the dentists and with the community to find ways of supporting. But this

money that is in our budget, Mr. Speaker, will help families to access more support for their kids.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Hamilton’s medical officer of health says that 42% of grade 2 students in Hamilton have tooth decay. Fifty bucks per child won’t fix that—and neither has this Liberal government’s Healthy Smiles Ontario program. Promising to send voters a \$50 cheque isn’t a dental plan. It looks more like vote buying.

The Liberals have ignored people’s—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader will withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Promising to send voters a \$50 cheque isn’t a dental plan. The voters can decide for themselves exactly what it is.

The Liberals have ignored people’s dental care needs for 15 years. Is this Liberal Premier trying to get votes or trying to get kids to the dentist?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, for a number of years, we have been putting more supports in place for Healthy Smiles Ontario, all of which improvements the leader and her party have voted against. Let’s just be clear about what this program is. There would be reimbursements of up to a maximum of \$400 per single person, \$600 per couple and \$700 for a family of four with two children.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it is not all that is needed. I know that there’s more that needs to be done. We will continue to find ways to support families as they look for care for their kids. But we’re also putting in place free preschool child care. We’re expanding the free tuition program. It is not in isolation that we are putting these programs in place. We understand that people need support. Putting some dental care and pharmacare in place is part of that, but it’s part of a much bigger package of support that we recognize families need across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier doesn’t actually have a plan to ensure that children in Ontario can see a dentist. That’s obvious.

Doug Ford and the Conservatives would be even worse, quite frankly. The solution to a bad choice isn’t picking something worse.

New Democrats will ensure that every child in Ontario can see a dentist no matter where they live or how much money their parents earn.

Why doesn’t the Premier believe in universal access to dental care, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I believe in universal access. The leader of the third party talks about universal access, and yet the small plan for pharmacare that she put forward would only have covered 110 prescription medications. Our program, which is universal for all children from their birth till their 25th birthday—and next year for seniors—will cover all 4,400 medications.

So we come at this from a different angle, but I believe that we both understand that were we to build a medicare system today, pharmacare and dental care would be part of that. Unfortunately, we can't roll the clock back to 1969, and so we are building in those supports. But do I believe that they need to be broader and they need to be national? Absolutely. I will continue to fight for that.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Maybe she should roll the clock back to 2003. They could have got started back then.

Perhaps we should have a Premier who understands what the word "universality" means.

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my next question is to the Premier. Last week, I met Garry in Oshawa, who told me about having to pull his own tooth because he couldn't afford the dental work. He has a hole in his mouth now and can only chew on the left side of his mouth. Worse than pulling his own tooth was having to leave the dentist's office with his son, unable to afford the filling and knowing that his child would have to wait months in pain until he could afford the dental filling—a delay that made the cavity worse, made the pain worse and made the work more expensive. This should not be happening in Ontario.

For 15 years, the Liberals didn't help Garry or his son or many, many families like them, and their dental scheme still wouldn't. Why not?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment, but we have not waited until now to address this issue. The leader of the third party would perpetuate that, but that is not true. We have been building the Healthy Smiles Ontario program. We recognize that there is a huge challenge for families across the province. This budget introduces a benefit, a new Ontario Drug and Dental Program. It will reimburse families up to \$700 for a family, a couple with two children. We've also committed to extending public dental programs to low-income adults by 2025.

1100

We recognize that there is a problem. We have been working to solve it. We will continue to work to solve it. This is not a new issue, even though the leader of the third party has come to this issue of late. We have been working to find solutions. We've been working with the dental community. We will continue to do that. In the interim, we are putting this program in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I guess the Premier forgot about the other question, when I talked about the 42% of grade 2 students with dental decay. That shows you how ineffective their Healthy Smiles program has been.

Jordan Dottori is studying to be a social worker in Sarnia. She wants to make Ontario a better place for

people. She is lucky to have some dental coverage at school, but it's only \$500, which she splits between her care and the care of her son. Last week, she found out that she is going to need \$1,200 worth of work to fix an abscessed tooth. Even with her insurance and with the Premier's plan, Jordan would be out of pocket, so she can't afford to get her abscess done.

Jordan needs full dental coverage. Jordan's son needs full dental coverage. Why doesn't the Premier get that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Certainly our government recognizes the importance of good oral health care for the people in this province. That's precisely why we have, through the years that we've been in government, been expanding our programs in this regard.

The Premier has mentioned the Healthy Smiles program. This has expanded coverage, and now covers some 470,000 children across this province for important dental services. It includes free preventive, routine and emergency dental services for children and youth from low-income households across the province, and there is no limit to our funding for the Healthy Smiles program. We work with dentists to ensure that every single eligible child has the necessary services available. And of course, with our budget, we have extended this coverage to vulnerable people in a case where they do not have any extended health benefits themselves.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I believe in universal health care. The Premier and her government have spent 15 years overcrowding hospitals.

I believe in pharmacare for everyone. The Premier is picking and choosing who she thinks will help her win an election.

I believe everyone should be able to see a dentist. The Premier wants to pay for only half of a child's filling.

Why doesn't the Premier believe in health and dental care for everyone?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, we didn't pick which drugs to cover in our OHIP+ coverage. We cover all the drugs under the Ontario Drug Benefit plan, those that are deemed eligible for that plan.

And of course, we have been providing dental care in many different ways to vulnerable people in Ontario. Our government does provide dental benefits for individuals receiving income support under the Ontario Disability Support Program. For those who are on Ontario Works, they also may receive dental coverage when in need of emergency dental care or to help them get back on their feet and participate in employment assistance activities.

We have taken many steps to improve dental care in this province, and our budget takes it to the next level. People will be receiving up to 80% of eligible expenditures to a certain limit. It's an excellent step forward.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Premier. The Liberal government just made a \$31-million payout to

the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association a month before the election. Harvey Bischof, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, described the settlement on Friday as "a dirty deal that clearly wasn't done dirt cheap."

Sam Hammond, president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, called the payment "outrageous." He went on to say, "Is this a way for the Liberals to reward their political allies and retaliate against ETFO and others for successfully challenging the government's violation of our charter rights?"

Does the Liberal government share the concerns of Ontario's major teachers' unions?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise and speak about this very important issue, and to create some clarity about what's going on. First of all, I want to make sure that the member opposite understands that the Superior Court directed all parties to work together to reach a resolution on remedy, and so they directed all of us to do that. I'm pleased to say that we have reached agreements with the OSSTF, OPSEU, CUPE and Unifor.

In addition to this, this is also about mitigating further risks and further constitutional challenges, so we are moving forward by ensuring that our school systems continue to run smoothly without disruptions. What we're doing is proactively moving forward with further settlements and agreements with associations to ensure that we are resolving any grievances that may be out there, and ensuring that we are preparing for the future.

I'm happy to answer more.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Premier: A \$31-million payout a month before the election is rightly raising some eyebrows and concerns. Whether it's school closures, violence in the classrooms or the mental health crisis in elementary and secondary schools, the Liberal government only seems to care about education when it helps their political self-interest.

Speaker, is the Liberal government trying to buy support a month before the election?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Again, I want to point out that the Superior Court directed all parties to work together to reach a resolution on remedy, so we have moved forward with agreements with the OSSTF, OPSEU, CUPE and Unifor.

And now we have ongoing discussions with five different groups. As you heard, we just settled with OECTA. We're also looking at five other groups, including AEFO, OCEW and principals, to just name a few.

Why? Because we want to mitigate the risk of further constitutional challenges. Mr. Speaker, this is called doing our due diligence, ensuring that the school system is there, is strong and is working for all parties and every-

one there, to ensure that our children do get the best-quality education they can.

The parties are at the various bargaining tables and have different priorities in their negotiations, and so it takes time to ensure that we are doing everything we can to reach agreements with all of these various pieces and all of these various associations. But we are doing our best to ensure that we are doing what needs to get done.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France G  linas: Ma question est pour la premi  re ministre. Speaker, ask any nurse, any health care professional, any physician or any families who need health care and they will tell you there is a crisis of hallway medicine and overcrowding inside Ontario's hospitals. Under this Premier's watch, hospitals have been forced to cut beds, cut nurses and cut care year after year, making wait times longer for people who need that care. But instead of fixing the problem with a plan to end hallway medicine and fund hospitals properly every year, the Premier is disappointing people once again.

New Democrats have a plan to end hallway medicine. Why doesn't this government?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Health.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, this really goes to the heart of our budget proposals, which I'm sure the member opposite is aware of. We have invested each and every year in our hospitals.

In this year, in particular—if the opposition parties might actually read our budget and perhaps pass it with us—we are proposing an additional investment of \$822 million for Ontario's publicly funded hospitals; this is a 4.6% overall increase. It will increase capacity, it will decrease wait times and it will improve access to care for families across Ontario. It means 26,000 additional MRI operating hours, 14,000 more surgical and medical procedures, and 3,000 more cardiac procedures. Of course, in many other areas also, our capacity will be increased through this major investment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France G  linas: For four straight years, the Premier froze hospital budgets, meaning deep cuts to the care that people count on.

Now, patients are being treated in hallways. Emergency room wait times have hit record highs. Hospitals from London to Toronto, Ottawa to Sudbury, Thunder Bay and beyond are all dangerously overcrowded, but instead of fixing the problem, this Premier is leaving the hospital sector in the dark, without a long-term plan to end hallway medicine once and for all.

1110

Why is this government letting people down and refusing to fix the crisis inside our hospitals that this Liberal government's cuts created?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: In the last week I've had the opportunity to visit many hospitals across this province. I have been hearing from hospital CEOs and from board members what exactly our investments are going to mean. They are receiving it extremely positively.

They know perfectly well that we have made investments each and every year of additional capacity to our hospitals. Last year, it was some \$500 million to hospitals. And then, of course, in the fall, because of the poor flu season and some particular circumstances, we added capacity across the continuum of care by adding 1,200 hospital beds and another 800 spaces in the community for patient care across the province. That was equivalent to six new medium-sized hospitals.

I'd be really curious to know if the third party's plan coming up, when we finally hear it, would again cut 9,645 beds, as they did in the past.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question this morning is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Speaker, libraries support children learning, provide resources for students and newcomers and help small businesses and entrepreneurs. They play a valuable role in communities across the province, whether they are urban, rural or indigenous. I know how important the Perth/Dupont, Bloor/Gladstone and Dufferin/St. Clair libraries are in my riding of Davenport.

In 2016, 1,141 library service points across Ontario received over 71 million in-person visits, 104 million electronic and 26 million social media visits. Along with many Ontarians, I was thrilled to see in this year's budget additional funding allocated towards libraries across the province. This includes support for both operating and digital public library funding.

Mr. Speaker, through to you to the minister, can you tell the members of this House more about how important libraries are in our communities?

Hon. Daiene Vernile: I want to thank the member for Davenport for that important question. Under this government's culture strategy, we made a pledge to continue to support services like libraries that boost the quality of life in all our communities. More funding is going to ensure that libraries across the province can continue to respond to the needs of residents.

Speaker, on this side of the House we're always looking for ways to ensure that libraries have the supports in place that they need to thrive. By way of comparison, the party opposite does not mention the word culture even once in its election platform.

More troubling, the Leader of the Opposition vowed to close libraries during his time as a Toronto councillor. He said that he would close a library in his riding in "a heartbeat," and even went so far as to suggest that there are more libraries than Tim Hortons in his riding, which was an exaggeration that proved to be false.

Speaker, our government remains committed to supporting essential hubs like libraries that do connect people—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you to the minister for that response. Libraries are indeed the pillars of know-

ledge in our cities, towns and local communities. Not only are they a resource to grab your favourite literary titles, but they are an integral tool when it comes to supporting our educational institutions. As a mom of two young boys, I know first-hand how important libraries are to support school projects.

The services that libraries provide help to expand the knowledge and insight of the communities that they serve and are meant to connect people to the resources in a way that is easily accessible and efficient.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on the funding available to libraries announced in this year's budget?

Hon. Daiene Vernile: Thank you to the member for that question. I, too, as a mother of three, spend many hours in our local public library.

The member noted that libraries are a vehicle to spread knowledge within our local communities and that's why I'm proud to say that our government is making the most significant investment in public libraries in a generation. We are investing \$79 million more into public libraries, including \$51 million over three years in annual increases and \$28 million over three years to launch a province-wide digital public library. This investment is going to help public libraries reduce costs of accessing digital content such as e-books and films, and give public library users across Ontario access to digital content. This is especially important in rural and remote areas.

I want to thank the Ontario Library Association and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries for their strong advocacy for public libraries right across the province of Ontario.

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday morning, the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale made a serious accusation. He accused Doug Ford of "deliberately" breaking the law. It was then retweeted by former-journalist-turned-Liberal-shill Ashley Csanady from the Premier's office.

Not only is the accusation egregious and false, the law they are accusing the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of breaking does not even exist. This is quite literally false news. It is reprehensible yet unsurprising that a former minister of this government and the Premier's office would have such a distorted view of the laws in Ontario.

Will the Acting Premier apologize on behalf of the Premier's office and the member for spreading such willful misrepresentations?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member makes reference to a situation—I believe it's the fact that the opposition haven't really presented their plan, and they have a plan but they haven't costed it. What they have—they had a plan that they then threw away.

I think the real question that's being asked by the people of Ontario is: What's your plan? How is it going

to be costed? What are the effects it's going to have on the people of Ontario? What are the cuts that they're making? People want to know.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again, back to the Acting Premier: The member from Ancaster-Dundas made a false statement. There was no response. I asked for an apology.

Now, maybe as a former minister and in that role he became accustomed to engaging and spreading false news; however, the facts do matter. The facts clearly show that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

I was lenient for a certain amount of time, but now you continue to repeat yourself under the premise of a falsehood. So would you please withdraw and stay away from it?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Carry on.

Mr. Randy Hillier: In a time when so much information we read on the Internet must be questioned and researched, the Premier's office should not be engaging in those sorts of activities. It's unacceptable, it's inappropriate and it's intolerable that the former minister is both ignorant of the laws and the facts.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear an apology or an answer to my first question. Will this Liberal government apologize for spreading bull?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite makes reference to the fact that their leader is making bumper sticker slogans and is not substantiating it with any real fact or determination. They had a plan. They costed the plan. We know the plan is about \$16 billion in the red. Come forward and tell the people of Ontario what's in your plan.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward-Hastings is warned.

New question.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Health. Donna Quehe gave me a call in my constituency office last week. We've been dealing with Donna's issues since 2016; we wrote a letter to the previous minister. She has TM joint disorder. That has to do with the joint in your lower jaw. It's a really grey area between OHIP and dental care. This lady has been fighting this for 20 years. It's gotten to the point where she needs to have her joints replaced.

Why she called is not so much for herself but for others, because if she could have had a dental care program, some of her problems would have been fixed.

What is \$400 going to do for Donna Quehe?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Well, certainly, we understand that there are many dental conditions that can be very troublesome. The one the member alluded to is temporomandibular joint pain. Certainly my heart goes out to the individual who is clearly suffering. Whatever my ministry can do to assist in any way, we'll certainly pursue—

Interjections.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do recognize that dental care is extremely important. It's an important aspect of people's overall health, and that's precisely why, in this budget, we have made a proposal to improve coverage for those without a dental plan. There are other avenues for people to pursue. In this particular case, I will certainly take this case back.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question. The member from Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Mr. Speaker, my question is for—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry, I apologize. Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you for the answer, Minister, but that doesn't help people like Donna. If Donna had had access to a dental program 15 years ago, she would still be a functioning part of this society. This might not be totally disabling for everyone, but in this case it was totally disabling. And coming from northern Ontario, a lot of times you don't even qualify for northern health travel grants.

People need dental coverage so that their life isn't ruined. Why did this government refuse to implement full dental coverage 15 years ago, and why does it continue to refuse to do so now?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I've been here for 10 years and I don't remember the third party ever raising this issue over those years until extremely recently. Of course, this is precisely why we have introduced our new Ontario drug and dental program. I'm hoping the parties opposite will support it because we are taking the next step to ensure that everyone in Ontario has access to the help that they need, no matter how old they are, what they do for a living or even where they live. Obviously, we care deeply about the health status of northern Ontarians. This is part of our plan to support care and opportunity and make life more affordable for Ontarians, and so, as the member opposite is very clear, I'm sure, we are offering \$400 for a single individual, \$600 for a couple and \$750 for a family of four. This is an excellent step forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I apologize to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane for missing his rotation.

New question.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. This year's budget outlined a bold, progressive plan for care and opportunity in Ontario. It

includes investments in the services people need and deserve, like pharmacare, child care and mental health. But it also includes historic investments in the infrastructure that people need to live the best lives possible and to fully participate in our economy, no matter what part of Ontario they call home.

I'm particularly excited about the government's latest commitment to broadband infrastructure which was featured in our budget. Providing access to fast, reliable Internet isn't just good for the economy; it enhances quality of life. It means students can complete their homework online, small businesses can make their goods available to a wider audience, and people can connect with loved ones in distant communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us about the broadband investment announced in the budget?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Thanks to the member from Kingston and the Islands for the question. Speaker, infrastructure is much more than bricks and mortar; it is also fibre optic cable connecting our rural and northern communities to high-speed Internet. To participate in the changing global economy, people need fast, reliable Internet as an essential service. That is why our government has already invested \$530 million in digital infrastructure since 2007. This includes \$90 million for the southwest, over \$62 million for northern First Nations communities and \$130 million for R&D for new 5G networking. On top of that, our budget includes an additional \$500 million for improved broadband, bringing our total commitment to over \$1 billion.

Speaker, if the Conservatives actually care for rural and northern Ontario, they will vote for these budget measures.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you to the minister for sharing some of the details on these essential investments. These projects referenced by the Minister of Infrastructure highlight the importance of expanding broadband in Ontario, and will further complement previous investments in broadband made by this government. I'm excited to hear that these projects have a particular focus on improving access to those living and working in rural, northern and indigenous communities in Ontario.

In addition to allowing rural Ontarians to fully participate in the 21st-century economy and access these basic services, accessible and affordable broadband is essential to the work that they do. Mr. Speaker, as you know, fast and reliable broadband access is a key ingredient to unlocking enormous economic potential in our rural communities.

Can the minister please tell us about how broadband investments benefit rural Ontario?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I do appreciate the investment. It will certainly help the wonderful residents of Kingston and the Islands. It helps families to stay in touch, connects small businesses to the world and allows rural communities to participate and compete in this economy.

Our government is very serious about getting Ontarians connected. That's why we're putting \$71 million towards a \$200-million broadband expansion, particularly to my good friends who run the Eastern Ontario Regional Network. Projects like these, of course, are going to help businesses.

Just last week, along with my colleague the Honourable Steven Del Duca, we were at the Canada Candy Company operation in beautiful Cobourg, Ontario. On the same day, we announced announcements at Armada Toolworks and Mariposa Dairy in the city of Kawartha Lakes.

Access to broadband has the potential to create and retain high-skilled jobs, increase productivity and promote innovation. It's necessary for all industries to grow in the province of Ontario. This is an important corporate investment, not corporate welfare.

FIRE SAFETY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Last spring, I introduced a private member's bill, the Rea and Walter Act. It is named in honour of two North Perth fire service members, Ken Rea and Ray Walter, who died battling a fire in March 2011. The bill would require buildings with truss and lightweight construction to display a decal that alerts firefighter ahead of time. This information is absolutely essential.

The Rea and Walter Act passed unanimously at second reading, but the bill died when this government, for political reasons, decided to prorogue the Legislature. To the minister: Now that I've mentioned the Rea and Walter Act, will she agree to fast-track it?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: First of all, I want to say thank you very much for the question and for the advocacy on this issue by the member opposite. We had a conversation, actually, once he introduced this private member's bill. Certainly, as a member, he is always welcome to reintroduce that bill again in this session.

The safety of all of our first responders, our firefighters, is paramount. When I look at issues that have arisen over the years and the inquests, we have moved forward on creating an expert fire table that actually has reviewed the private member's bill at that table, because what we want is to create a safer Ontario. Certainly, for us, moving forward is definitely to continue to work for that safety.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Back to the minister: The Rea and Walter Act responds to a real gap in firefighter safety. It could save lives as soon as it's passed. I was grateful for the strong support that I received from local fire chiefs, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and all parties in this Legislature.

I know that the government recently issued a bunch of regulatory changes under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, but they ignored the obvious: truss and lightweight identification. It's time to take action. If the gov-

ernment doesn't agree, why did they support the Rea and Walter Act at second reading, and when will they finally act on it?

1130

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Again, Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the question. I know that many members in this House have worked hard, and it was the member who brought forward the private member's bill. Certainly it is our hope that their work will not be lost.

We have proposed a comprehensive deal with the opposition parties to carry over all private members' bills, but under the new management, the Conservatives have actually refused this agreement. I want to share that in the House, Mr. Speaker, because that means that the only way those bills can go forward is for them to be re-introduced. So if a deal could have been reached—we value all the efforts of our members to introduce.

Again, I'm very sorry that a deal could not be reached under your new leadership.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Acting Premier: In March, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority illegally approved a massive development that would pave over Paradise Beach-Island Grove, a provincially significant wetland. I say "illegally" because this development clearly violates the provincial policy statement which strictly prohibits such developments.

Will the Premier direct this rogue conservation authority to follow the law, stop this development and prevent the loss of this provincially significant wetland?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: Thank you for the question. Indeed, I think while the ministry administers the Conservation Authorities Act and its regulations, it does not really oversee the operational decisions of a conservation authority. However, we are looking into this particular file to see whether there is anything that has not been done properly. No approvals or permits are required from MNRF, from the ministry, for this proposal. We've already ascertained that.

We know that the conservation authority regulates wetlands under their development interference with wetlands and the regulation that's appropriate. We are actually looking at whether there are things that can be done to see what has happened here. But up to now, we know we cannot interfere in operational decisions of the conservation authority.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Acting Premier: This isn't the first time that a rogue conservation authority has run roughshod over the province's laws to protect wetlands and natural heritage. My friend the member for Welland has warned about how the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority appears to have been captured by private interests. The NDP tabled amendments to fix this problem when the government updated the Conserv-

ation Authorities Act. The government members voted down those amendments.

Why is the Premier allowing conservation authorities and developers to ignore her government's own laws to protect wetlands and natural heritage?

Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: Thank you for the question. Obviously we're continuing to look at what are the possible avenues but, as of now, we have ascertained that it's an operational decision that they have made, and we are continuing to look to see the possible appeals that can be taken from that decision. That's where we are as of now.

Certainly wetlands protection is immensely important for this government. We've continued to put forward really strong protections for wetlands. That's what allows us to continue to preserve the natural heritage, and we will continue to do so.

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the minister responsible for early years and child care. Speaker, I am very proud that our government is committed to ensuring families have access to quality and affordable child care all across our province. Our government has been a proud champion for Ontario families, taking strong action to transform the way child care is delivered in our province.

In my riding of Beaches–East York, I represent a diverse range of people, including a large number who identify as First Nations and Métis. Speaker, as you know, the parties opposite have yet to mention anything in their platforms about child care for those living in on-reserve communities, but creating cultural, diverse and relevant child care in early learning spaces positively impacts our youngest learners' sense of self and will lead to better outcomes.

Speaker, will the minister responsible for early years and child care tell us what this government has been doing to meet the needs of indigenous families and children living on-reserve?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the hard-working member from Beaches–East York for this very important question.

Ontario recognizes the value of culturally appropriate early years and child care programs in First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities. In fact, our government is committed to working closely with indigenous partners to support a strong early years and child care system for these communities.

In our recent budget, we announced an investment of \$40 million over three years to support the expansion of licensed child care in First Nations communities. I think it's amazing news. This funding will help build valuable supports for young First Nations kids, to help them get a strong start in life.

In addition, new capital funding will also be available to First Nations to support the construction or retrofit of new and existing child care facilities. This will help create valuable spaces.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to thank the minister for her response and for that great announcement, and the amazing transformational work that she is doing to reform daycare in the province.

I know that indigenous youth are among the fastest-growing population groups in Ontario and that they face significant outcome and achievement gaps. This commitment of over \$40 million towards improving child care on reserves is a very significant program for children, families and communities. Child care is an integral part of parents' economic empowerment, and research shows that children benefit significantly from access to high-quality child care, including improved education, health and employment outcomes.

Can the minister please tell us about how much more our government has been doing and the kind of incredible transformational work that we have been doing with indigenous partners to support a better, brighter and more prosperous future for our indigenous youth?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

Hon. David Zimmer: This is a landmark commitment to expanding and improving child care on-reserve. It's another demonstration of our government's commitment to help indigenous children and youth grow up healthy and reach their full potential.

Our reconciliation action plan, *The Journey Together*, provides \$250 million towards initiatives including recreation-based life-promotion programming for indigenous youth and other anti-racism projects.

Our \$45-million OSAP overhaul—and this is very important—has driven a 35% increase in indigenous people receiving OSAP grants. Those people are now off to colleges and universities and can look forward to rewarding lives in this province.

Through our \$222-million First Nations Health Action Plan, we are improving food security and mental health for indigenous youth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, it's a shame—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When I stand, you sit.

New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is to the Acting Premier. Families in my riding of Niagara West—Glanbrook are horrified by the hallway medicine of this government. After 15 years, families face longer wait times, more service cuts and less front-line workers.

I recently heard from Lane and Melissa Tadeson of Smithville. Their family has been plunged into a very dark time since September, when their son was diagnosed with PANDAS. Melissa says, "We have essentially been denied treatment in Ontario, despite living adjacent to one of the largest city centres in Canada, and have been

forced to fly out of province to Alberta, to access treatment."

Why is this government showing this lack of care to Lane, Melissa and their sick son?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Health.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I certainly would like to hear directly from the member opposite about this particular case, because in some cases there are potential solutions. Of course, our hearts go out to this family that is having some difficulty.

But this is precisely why we have made the deliberate choice to continue to invest in care for the people of Ontario, and so we're investing more in health care and in hospitals. In particular, having visited a number in the last week or so and having seen the improvements that we're making and the reduction in wait times that people are facing, I'm really encouraged that our investment is exactly what we need to do.

Of course, hospitals are just one part of the entire puzzle. We need more home care, mental health care, long-term care—all part of our health care system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is back to the Acting Premier.

I also spoke recently with Dr. Julian Owen, a physician from Grimsby, and he said that he and his colleagues are frustrated with this Liberal government's approach to health care. He and physicians across the province feel like they are being treated unfairly. Throwing money at the problem doesn't work when the government has created 15 years of structural issues. Julian said, "Front-line care providers don't actually feel like their voices are heard. We aren't being listened to, and we can't trust any of the Liberals' promises."

Speaker, why won't the Liberals actually listen to doctors like Julian and stop forcing them to practise hallway medicine?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm surprised that the member opposite from that particular riding is raising the question of his local hospital; I understand that the Harris government was prepared to close that hospital.

Of course, I am really pleased that our government has continued to invest in health care across the spectrum. Of course, we value our health care professionals, including our physicians, but also all those hard-working nurses, the personal support workers. Each and every one of our health care professionals is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook is warned.

A wrap-up sentence, please.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: This is precisely why we're increasing our health care spending by 5%, to improve the capacity in our world-class health care system.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Wayne Gates: Speaker, my question is to the Acting Premier. Across this province, people are

struggling to make ends meet. Some are forced to take on debt just to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads. This is where predatory payday loan stores find them and often take advantage. In some cases, these outlets charge annual fees of 390% on loans. Despite us repeatedly asking this government to intervene, they've done very little to address this issue. Cities like Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa are trying to curb payday lenders because they know that they prey on people who are experiencing hard times.

Since this government's inaction is forcing cities to protect their residents themselves from payday lenders, why won't this government just step up and protect all Ontarians?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thanks to the member for the question. He'll know that Bill 59, the Putting Consumers First Act, 2017, amends a number of provincial statutes relating to alternative financial services. It's all about protecting consumers who use payday loans, alternative financial services. Through these amendments, we've made the rules stronger, we've reduced risk for consumers accessing these services, and we've reduced the cost of borrowing. The ministry consulted heavily with stakeholders, all kinds of groups that help inform the current direction we've taken. The regulations have been consulted on, as well. New rules come into force in July of this year.

We're very happy that we've taken this action to protect consumers and respect businesses in our communities, as well.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Acting Premier concerning incorrect news. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Perth-Wellington has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services concerning the Rea and Walter Act. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

SPEAKER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. Arthur Potts: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches-East York on a point of order.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It has come to my attention that the Speaker of this House celebrated a birthday on Saturday. I'd like us all to wish him a happy birthday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Speaker of this House loves to be reminded of how old he is.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOCKEY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: The amazing thing about hockey in Canada is how it brings us together. It's our shorthand. It's an experience we all share, whether it's shinny in the neighbourhood, early mornings at the arena or wearing jerseys the day of a big game.

And we don't just come together over hockey for the big wins—the Olympic medals, underdog playoff runs or celebrating hometown all-stars. We come together in the hard times, as we have over the last few days after the tragic crash involving the Humboldt Broncos. Our nation's hearts have broken for that team and their families. I don't think they have been far from anyone's mind since Friday.

We come together to support hockey in our local communities, to lift up the next generation. In my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, we have been celebrating the town of Lucan, which has been named Kraft Hockeyville 2018. It was amazing to see so many people, not just from Lucan but from Thorndale, Ilderton and many other Ontario small towns, rally together to support Lucan hockey. The arena is the heart of the town. It's where friendships, character and love of our national game have been built for generations. Lucan's rich hockey tradition has created incredible community spirit and pride.

I want to thank everyone who supported Lucan for Kraft Hockeyville 2018. I think it's clearer now than ever why this is important and why we do these things. We support hockey because hockey supports us right back.

LEADING WOMEN, LEADING GIRLS, BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I had the honour of hosting a very special event in our riding. Every year, our province recognizes volunteers. One of the specific awards is for women and girls who are strengthening our communities through leadership. This year, we hosted our first annual Leading Women, Leading Girls awards ceremony at our downtown library.

It was a packed house, filled with recipients, their nominators, friends, family and community supporters. We recognized almost 20 women and girls who volunteer and contribute in many ways. We recognized youth, a pilot, a museum volunteer, Rotarians, safety advocates, service club members, artists and musicians, an indigenous truth-sharer, advocates against violence against women, cancer support givers, human rights activists, church and anti-poverty volunteers, and other committed leaders.

We began the night with inspiring words from Jacki Minicola, DRPS Det. Staff sergeant of the domestic violence unit, who does tremendous work with her team in our community. We appreciated her message of resiliency and strength.

As we saw showcased at the event, leadership looks different for everyone. Volunteers are the heart of a community, but often they are the hands. They are sometimes the front lines, but often in the background. They do the heavy lifting we may never see, which lightens the load for our friends and neighbours. They lift us up, and so it was my honour to return the favour at our awards ceremony.

I'd like to thank Felicio's Cake Boutique, Berry Hill Food Co. and Dream Bloom for the delicious food and decorations. I'd also like to thank my staff for their work in making this first annual event so special.

I look forward to next year, when we can appreciate and recognize so many more leading women and girls who are making a difference and making strides in our community. Thank you and, again, congratulations.

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Arthur Potts: I stand today to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. In the early morning of April 9, 1917, Canadian soldiers stormed Vimy Ridge and took the land from the Germans. Together with the British corps, the Canadians captured more ground, prisoners and artillery pieces than any previous British offensive in the war. Canadians would act with courage throughout the battle, and four of our soldiers would earn the Victoria Cross, the highest medal of military valour.

Canada's military achievements during the war raised our international stature and helped us earn a separate signature on the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War.

In France, the Canadian National Vimy Memorial honours those soldiers listed as "missing or presumed dead."

I have a long family history of military service. My grandfather, Major General Arthur Edward Potts, served in both World War I and World War II. His regiment served at Vimy, but he missed the action, as he was recovering from shrapnel that he had sustained in an earlier battle. His five brothers also served in the Great War, but three didn't make it.

His brother Joseph, a private in the 2nd Battalion, may have been at Vimy because he died April 10, 1917 and is buried in France. His brother Henry Potts, a 2nd lieutenant, died July 21, 1917, at the age of 29. And his brother Robert Potts, a 2nd lieutenant in the 25th Battalion, died March 24, 1918, and is buried in France.

So Grandpa and his regiment went to Vimy. I think it was a time when he considered that this was an important way that Canadians should be contributing to the service. My father and his five brothers and sisters also supported it.

They carried a mentality, fighting at Vimy Ridge, that came at an unbearable cost. They displayed strength of character and a commitment to freedom. To quote World

War I veteran Reginald Roy, "I became a Canadian on Vimy Ridge. We became a nation there in the eyes of the world. It cut across French and English, rich and poor, urban and rural. Vimy Ridge confirmed that ... [we] were as good" as any European nation.

RICK LUND

Mr. Norm Miller: As we celebrate Vimy Ridge Day, I rise to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Mr. Rick Lund of Parry Sound. Mr. Lund has been a teacher at Parry Sound high school for more than 20 years. It is particularly fitting to speak of Mr. Lund's achievement today, on Vimy Ridge Day. Mr. Lund's passion for preserving the memory of Canadians who fought for our country resulted in his receiving the Order of Parry Sound this past year.

Among his many roles as an educator, Mr. Lund accompanied 40 Parry Sound high school students to France last year to take part in the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. He described the importance of that trip for him as the ceremony's effect on his students. During the ceremony he witnessed the students' emotional response and the moment when they realized that everything they have is because of the sacrifice of others.

Rick has also headed up a unique memorial project, the Community Remembrance Project in Parry Sound, which I spoke about in the House last November 1. Inspired by their trip to Vimy Ridge, Mr. Lund and the students launched a community-driven initiative to create banners with photos of local veterans to hang from lampposts around Parry Sound.

It is important we all remember the 100,000 Canadians who fought at Vimy Ridge 101 years ago today, the 3,598 who died at the battle of Vimy Ridge and the 7,004 who were wounded. I want to personally thank Mr. Lund for all that he has done to ensure today's students remember the sacrifices of the past.

ACCIDENT IN HUMBOLDT, SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Wayne Gates: Showing respect and grieving with the community of Humboldt, last night we had the Falls lit up in yellow and green in remembrance of the Broncos, to honour those who lost their lives. It's a sign to the community of Humboldt that we will never forget the coach, the assistant coach, the announcer, the 18-year-old stats keeper, the bus driver and the young players who were taken from us after this terrible accident.

I understand what Junior A players mean to a community. As someone who is a Junior A hockey fan, some of my happiest memories as a young kid were of Junior A games. I watched the players practise every day at 4 o'clock when I was 8 or 9 years old. The Junior A players even let me ride the bus with them as they played games across Ontario.

These young leaders were taken from us far too young. I cannot even begin to imagine the pain their loss

has caused for the small town of less than 6,000 residents. This is a tragedy that has impacted the very fabric of their community and, quite frankly, all of Canada. We all know how important hockey is in our communities.

Tonight, I'm going back to Niagara to be with my community at our local Junior A game. We will grieve together for those 15 lost in this tragic accident. We'll be having a moment of silence and collecting donations for the community.

I want the families, the friends and the community of Humboldt to know that we stand by you, we love you, we grieve beside you and we will never, ever forget you.

ONCOLOGY NURSING DAY

Mr. John Fraser: Last Tuesday, April 3, marked the 15th anniversary of Oncology Nursing Day in Canada. Cancer does not discriminate. The disease affects people of all genders, age groups and walks of life. Two in five Canadians will develop cancer in their lifetime.

1310

Each year, Oncology Nursing Day brings together oncology nurses, health care professionals, government leaders, media and members of the public in collaborative activities to acknowledge the importance of oncology nursing.

Oncology nurses endeavour to educate the public in the prevention and treatment of cancer. Oncology nurses, in their respective practice settings, are involved through prevention, detection, treatment, rehabilitation or palliative care.

The Canadian association of oncology nurses is the national organization that supports Canadian nurses to advance oncology nursing excellence through practice, education, research and leadership, to the benefit of all Canadians.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all the oncology nurses in my hometown of Ottawa—indeed, in Ontario and across Canada. I want to thank you for being on the front lines of cancer treatment, care and research. There are countless stories of oncology nurses profoundly impacting the lives of Canadian cancer patients and their families. Again, I want to thank them for the important work that they do to support our families.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Every April, Ontarians celebrate Be a Donor month to support organ and tissue donation awareness. This year, Trillium Gift of Life Network is asking all Ontarians to join Donor Nation because one donor can save eight lives and enhance the lives of 75 others.

Today, I'd like to recognize Joanna and Ryley Mitchell, constituents from my riding, who are the recipients of the Trillium Gift of Life Network Champion Award, which is given to Ontarians who have made a difference in organ donation and transplantation. Ryley received a heart transplant at the age of seven months, and she and her mother have dedicated the past 12 years

to volunteering at awareness events and sharing their story with the media. Joanna sits on the executive committee of the Life Donation Awareness Association of Midwest Ontario, while Ryley regularly participates in the Canadian Transplant Games. Ryley also donated her birthday presents to children at SickKids and often joins her mother at speaking events.

Thank you, Joanna and Ryley, for your contributions to organ and tissue donation awareness and for your involvement and leadership in our community.

Over 1,500 Ontarians are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, and every three days someone in Ontario dies while waiting.

This April, during Be a Donor month, please consider taking two minutes to register as an organ donor and tissue donor online at www.beadonor.ca and talk to your family about organ and tissue donation. By registering to become a donor, you can save or change someone's life.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. James J. Bradley: Speaker, I was delighted to be in the House as the provincial budget was read, noting that since the recession Ontario's economy has gained over 800,000 net new jobs and the unemployment rate has steadily declined to a 17-year low as of February 2018. Since 2014, Ontario's economy has grown more than Canada's and all other G7 countries.

Out of the budget came the fact that Ontario is planning to bring new weekday GO rail service between the future Confederation GO station and Hamilton and Niagara region, starting in 2021. And there was an announcement of 21 new long-term-care beds at Pleasant Manor in Virgil.

The budget also reduces wait times by increasing hospital operating budgets across Ontario by some \$822 million this year—making an additional \$2.1-billion investment in mental health and addictions care; providing free preschool for children aged two-and-a-half until kindergarten, in addition to helping over 100,000 more children access licensed daycare over five years; expanding OHIP+ to include free prescriptions for everyone 65 and over, saving an average of \$240 per person each year; introducing a new Ontario Drug and Dental Program; providing up to \$750 to help seniors 75 and over with maintenance costs so they can continue to live comfortably at home; and, last but not least, having ODSP and OW payments increase 3% per year over the next—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Further members' statements?

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm honoured to rise in honour of recognizing the 101st anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge and to sport the official Vimy tie in honour of all those brave heroes.

Last year I shared with the members in this House personal stories from my visit to France to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge.

Vimy Ridge was fought in April 1917 and remains known as the first battle when the Canadian Expeditionary Force fought united for the first time and defined us as a country.

But having observed at Vimy last year the sight of so many Canadian Armed Forces boots—there were thousands of them dotted over the ridge—I was reminded why battles like Vimy that claim so many lives, including those from my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, have had a profound impact on the way we as Canadians think about the sacrifices of those who gave their lives so we can enjoy peace, liberty, freedom and security today.

As I shared with the members last year, I was truly humbled to join with 25,000 fellow Canadians who paid homage to our forefathers' contributions and brave sacrifices in the First World War, including those from my riding: Billy Bishop, his cousin William Allan Bishop, and Leslie Kyle Armstrong.

Billy Bishop's cousin William Allan, who was three years older than Billy, enlisted in the 25th Battery in Toronto and was a gunner with the Canadian Field Artillery Regiment. He was killed in 1916 and commemorated at Vimy Ridge.

Leslie Kyle Armstrong served as a private with the 147th Grey Overseas Battalion. While he served at both Vimy and Passchendaele, he was wounded at Passchendaele and returned home to Owen Sound in 1918.

With Canadian soldiers—men and women—continuing to serve around the world, it is important to remember the past. I'm a believer that how we remember the past determines how we will shape our future.

Finally, I want to share a quote from the retired chief of defence and passionate patriot General Rick Hillier, who I believe captured our shared respect for the ultimate sacrifice our veterans made on our behalf: "Every Canadian should make this pilgrimage to Vimy to honour our valiant heroes and truly appreciate our history and how fortunate we are to be Canadians."

I invite the members to join me in saluting every man and woman who wears our Armed Forces uniform. Lest we forget.

USE OF PROP IN THE HOUSE

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm seeking unanimous consent to have the baubinia purple golden flower girl to be present when I re-table the Nanjing Massacre commemorative bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Scarborough–Agincourt is seeking unanimous consent to have flowers at her desk when she introduces a bill. Do we agree? Agreed.

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Arthur Potts: I believe we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence in honour of Vimy Ridge and to wear commemorative pins to commemorate that occasion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence and to wear the pins that no one is wearing right now, because we wait until unanimous consent to wear them. We will now wear them. Do we agree? Agreed.

Could I ask everyone to please rise in the House to observe a moment of silence—yes, everyone in the House; thank you—for those who sacrificed their lives at Vimy Ridge and celebrate that anniversary?

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. God rest their souls.

You may now wear your pins.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NANJING MASSACRE COMMEMORATIVE DAY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DU MASSACRE DE NANJING

Ms. Wong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day / Projet de loi 36, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif du massacre de Nanjing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Soo Wong: The bill proclaims December 13 in each year as Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day, if passed.

1320

PETITIONS

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government created a special-purpose account (SPA) in 1997;

"Whereas the SPA pools together all revenues from hunting and fishing licensing fees, fines and royalties. The funds in the SPA are legislated to be reinvested back into wildlife management to improve hunting and angling across the province;

"Whereas the government is refusing to release the details of the spending of the" special purpose account;

"Whereas a recently obtained report showed" special purpose account "expenditures from 2011-12 revealed expenditures (i.e. \$69,000 spent to purchase and sell a

house and \$55,000 devoted to a psychologist) that are unrelated to wildlife management;

"Whereas in the past the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has indicated that records for the SPA fund cannot be released as 'they do not exist';

"Whereas this is in direct contradiction to the Financial Administration Act that requires receipts and disbursement to be recorded for all special-purpose accounts;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That in the name of accountability and transparency the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry direct the Auditor General to conduct a value-for-money audit of the SPA fund."

I fully support, affix my name and send it with page Curtis.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition in support of the recommendations that were brought to this House by the London West Girls' Government. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas as many as one in five children and youth in Ontario will experience some form of mental health problem; and

"Whereas 70% of mental health problems start in childhood or adolescence; and

"Whereas significant mental health problems can and do occur in very young children, with 17% of children aged two to five meeting diagnostic criteria for mental health problems; and

"Whereas 73% of teachers agree that anxiety disorders among students are a pressing concern; and

"Whereas more than 12,000 children and youth in Ontario are currently waiting to access mental health services; and

"Whereas over the last 10 years there has been a 63% increase in emergency department visits and a 67% increase in hospitalizations for Ontario children and youth with mental health issues; and

"Whereas there is a chronic shortage of pediatric psychiatric services, with fewer than 100 child and youth psychiatrists for the entire province of Ontario; and

"Whereas suicide is the leading cause of non-accidental death for Canadian youth, with at least three young lives lost through suicide every week in Ontario...;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly direct the government of Ontario to implement a comprehensive strategy for reducing child and youth suicide, involving the Ministries of Education, Health and Long-Term Care, Children and Youth Services and any other relevant ministries, that is developed in close coordination with community suicide prevention planning."

I fully support this petition, affix my name and will give it to page Stephanie to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to do with health care in Parry Sound-Muskoka. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has been considering the future of the Huntsville District Memorial and South Muskoka Memorial hospitals since 2012; and

"Whereas accessible health care services are of critical importance to all Ontarians, including those living in rural areas; and

"Whereas patients currently travel significant distances to access acute in-patient care, emergency, diagnostic and surgical services at available at these hospitals; and

"Whereas the funding for small and medium-sized hospitals has not kept up with increasing costs including hydro rates and collective bargaining agreements made by the province; and

"Whereas the residents of Muskoka and surrounding areas feel that MAHC has not been listening to them; and

"Whereas the board of MAHC has yet to take the single-site proposal from 2015 off its books;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario requests that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care ensures core hospital services are maintained at both Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and South Muskoka Memorial Hospital and ensures all small and medium-sized hospitals receive enough funding to maintain core services."

I agree with this petition and give it to Maxime.

BOMBARDIER LANDS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mr. Brian McDonald from Hanmer in my riding for gathering the names on this petition. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bombardier Inc. has indicated its intent to explore the sale of Bombardier-owned lands at Downsview;

"Whereas Bombardier is Toronto's largest industrial employer and a source for good jobs in the GTA and across the province through the supply chain;

"Whereas the provincial government has invested heavily in developing an aerospace research hub on Downsview lands and included Bombardier as a key stakeholder;

"Whereas the provincial government has a vested interest in maintaining and growing the aerospace industry in Ontario; and

"Whereas actions by the Ontario government have implications for municipal decisions;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly to refrain from taking any action that could ease the sale of

Bombardier-owned and -occupied land at Downsview, Toronto.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Joseph to bring it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Orkambi was approved by Health Canada for use in cystic fibrosis ... patients with two copies of the F508del-CFTR mutation, aged 12 years and older;

“Whereas Orkambi is the first drug to treat the basic defect in the largest population of Canadians with cystic fibrosis. It can slow disease progression, allowing patients to live longer, healthier lives;

“Whereas CF specialists have established clinical criteria for Orkambi, including start and stop criteria; these specialists are best suited to manage access to medications in the treatment of CF patients;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to negotiate a fair price for Orkambi and to make it available through Ontario public drug programs for those who meet the conditions set by Health Canada and the clinical criteria established by Canadian CF clinicians.”

I agree with this petition. I will sign my name and leave it with page Madeline.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas patients receiving psychotherapy treatment from a registered psychotherapist ... in private practice must pay HST on the fee charged;

“Whereas psychotherapy is a health service which, when provided within the scope of practice of members of any other regulated health profession (RHP), is HST exempt;

“Whereas the HST adds a financial barrier on top of the social and cultural stigma that can accompany mental illness;

“Whereas there is a federal government process that allows groups to request the removal of HST from services;

“Whereas there is confidence that the tax will eventually be removed by the federal government;

“Whereas political staff have advised that a delay of three years is to be expected;

“Whereas Ontario has in the past acted separately from the federal government to effectively remove the HST;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Removal of HST on psychotherapy be incorporated as a piece of the overall effort to make mental health”

services “as accessible as possible to the citizens of Ontario.”

I agree with the petition and put my signature on it.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition to resolve the crisis in Ontario corrections.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has faced serious criticism by OPSEU, offender advocacy groups, media, the general public, the Ombudsman, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the MCSCS independent auditor (Mr. Howard Sapers) and the Auditor General as a result of significant deficiencies in the correctional system; and

“Whereas the rates of assaults on correctional workers continues to increase exponentially; and

“Whereas Ontario probation and parole officers have the highest workloads in the nation; and

“Whereas Ontario has one of the highest recidivism rates in Canada; and

“Whereas the current working conditions of correctional staff, coupled with the comparatively low rates of investment across Canada has resulted in difficulties with staff retention and recruitment;

“We, the undersigned correctional workers, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario government significantly increase expenditures to resolve the crisis in corrections by hiring full-time correctional workers, increasing funding for adequate offender services and increasing investments to recruit and retain skilled professionals and reduce recidivism.”

Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this petition. I affix my name to it and send it with page Will.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Han Dong: I have a petition “That Animal Cruelty Legislation be Amended to Recognize the Plight of Kiska, Canada’s Last Remaining Captive Orca.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, has recognized, through clear scientific research, that Orcinus orca (further known as orca) are an extremely emotional, exceptionally intelligent, highly social, deep-diving and wide-ranging species that have no place residing in chlorinated concrete tanks; and

“Whereas because of these exceptional traits, the government of Ontario has acknowledged and since prohibited the further breeding and acquisition of orcas within the province; and

1330

“Whereas the government of Ontario failed to include Kiska—Ontario’s, and in fact Canada’s, sole surviving captive orca—in the recent prohibition of orcas; and

“Whereas Kiska shares all these same traits as her wild counterparts, the very same traits the government

has now recognized do not make appropriate candidates for captivity; and

“Whereas not recognizing the specific situation of Kiska in the prohibition makes no logical nor humane sense as she is the only captive orca in the entire world who is forced to reside in complete seclusion from any other marine mammal;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the current legislation (Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, RSO 1990, c. O.36) be amended to recognize and address the plight of Kiska (who resides at Marineland Canada in Niagara Falls, Ontario) based on her special circumstances as noted above.”

I support this petition and I'll sign it and give it to page Colin.

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario Regulation 347/13 has made four changes to the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS), also known as Ontario Regulation 34/10 effective Feb 1, 2014. These regulations have considerably reduced the dollar amounts allocated for patients receiving assessments and treatment following a motor vehicle accident;

“Whereas the \$3,500 minor injury guideline cap is an insufficient amount of funds provided, since assessments on all patients are required to ensure their safe ability in performing tasks associated with attendant care, housekeeping and caregiving. Furthermore repetitive muscular strain as a result of performing household tasks daily can lead to chronic long-term impairment. Accidental slips/falls due to dizziness/vertigo can result in further injuries involving fractures;

“Whereas this petition is to validate that the \$3,500 minor injury guideline monetary fund is an insufficient amount to enable auto accident patients with soft tissue injury (WAD I/WAD II) to reach optimal recovery to their pre-accident status. Removing sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule will enable the right efforts for accident victims with soft tissue injury to receive the adequate assessment and treatment required. In addition it will minimize the patient's risks for further injury (chronic impairment, slips/falls, fractures) that are associated with performing attendant care, housekeeping/home maintenance, caregiving and functional tasks in their respective homes;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To remove the minor injury guideline, sections 18(1) and 18(2) of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.”

INJURED WORKERS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario titled “Workers’ Comp Is a Right.

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

I couldn’t agree with this more, Mr. Speaker. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Maxime to bring to the Clerk.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mr. Robert Spencer from Val Caron in my riding for this petition.

“Whereas Valley East’s privately operated ServiceOntario centre closed abruptly in January 2018; and

“Whereas the people of Valley East have the right to reliable business hours and reasonable wait times; and

“Whereas the people of Valley East have the right to a full range of services in both English and French; and

“Whereas the people of Valley East pay the same provincial taxes as other Ontarians and have the right to equal services;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Minister of Government and Consumer Services instruct ServiceOntario to immediately and permanently open and staff a public ServiceOntario centre in Valley East.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Stephanie to bring it to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for petitions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PAY TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018

SUR LA TRANSPARENCE SALARIALE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 29, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment / Projet de loi 3, Loi portant sur la transparence salariale.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

It's interesting: The government says that this is important, but actions, as we all know, speak louder than words. This government could have done something about this any time in the past 15 years. Yet, just before an election—ironic how that happens with so many pieces of legislation coming forward in the eleventh hour just before an election.

Premier Wynne did identify this as an issue right away, and the government did a study into the gender wage gap in 2014. But they didn't do anything with the recommendations until now, as I said, weeks before an election—four years. If they were truly sincere, if they were truly earnest about doing something to shorten the gap, make a difference and bring this up to par, they would have done it before now.

The Ontario Pay Equity Office has a budget of less than \$3 million. This is the lowest in its 30-year history. Again, how much of a priority is it when you make it the lowest in history? There are only about 20 staff in the office, and a number of vacancies, at last count, in the government staff directory—a 20% vacancy rate. So again they talk “priority” and yet they don't even fill the roles that are there—some of which, frankly, could be the people they want to give this gender equity to.

It creates the ability for the government to create a pay equity day through regulation. Why not actually create a pay equity day in the legislation? That's one of the easiest things to do.

One of the things we see often now is that they're putting a lot of things into regulation. It actually doesn't have to come here before you, Mr. Speaker, and before us as the legislators—the democratically elected legislators—to come here and have proper debate. That concerns me in a significant way because we're seeing more and more of those things. It's interesting when you think of the title, “transparency,” and yet they're doing a lot of things that aren't even coming in front of the Legislature to be properly debated.

I take, as I'm sure all people in this House do, my responsibility very seriously to bring the views of my constituents—the people that we are democratically elected by—to come here and speak and bring those debate

issues out so that we actually develop the best legislation: very clear, concise, good legislation that is actually going to serve all of the people of Ontario, not just a particular partisan need or the whim of a special-interest group. We want to make sure that we have the actual legislation debated properly so that we are moving forward.

Rather than being a complaints-driven process, this bill allows compliance officers to enter a business without a warrant—something this government seems to like to do. The recent changes to the conservation act also allowed warrantless entry. The government has increased warrantless entry in a number of pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, again, they continue to assault—it's almost like they're against business, and particularly small business, when you see pieces of legislation like this. Yet again they're doing things without consulting. They're doing things that we wonder, “Is it really in the best interests of the people of Ontario?”

When I see things like “compliance officer”: With this government's record over the last 15 years, what I see is yet another bureaucracy being built where people are coming in as police officers, in the mindset of, “We're going to find fault with you. We're going to find concerns and we're going to fine you,” again putting more burden onto those businesses.

It really concerns me. I haven't seen any numbers of how many compliance officers. I've seen no data that suggests how much they will spend on compliance officers. I think the people out there that are very concerned about the equity of dollars and value and remuneration would actually like to see that money spent on narrowing the gap in what those salaries are as opposed to spending more and more money on compliance officers, who, again, don't even need a warrant. They can enter a business without a warrant. It seems to be going the opposite way—and I think all people across the province want to ensure that we actually have the laws that govern all of us and ensure that we're all treated in that same manner.

1340

One of the things I hear across Ontario when I travel, whether it be in my critic portfolio or to another riding to get a perspective different from mine—I hear people saying: “We're not properly consulted. We didn't see this coming. The government didn't sit with us and talk about it and make sure we understand it.” Either they go out and hire consultants and bring in a report and then, again, put in regulation—but they very rarely go to the front lines and talk to the people who are going to be most impacted. I'm certainly hearing that from businesses, over and over, as I'm sure you are in your riding, Mr. Speaker—a lot of small businesses in the great riding of Wellington, which you represent.

The concern that I want to raise with this piece of legislation, again, is, if they've had that much time, if they've had 14 years to do this, and yet they haven't actually gone out and done the consultation—they're doing it at the eleventh hour, I trust, again, as an election ploy, that they're bringing out a piece of legislation.

People haven't read the details. It sounds good. Why would anyone not want to support something like equity in legislation and remuneration? But at the end of the day, we want to make sure that it serves the people of Ontario properly.

Kathleen Wynne waited over 26 months—two-plus years—before creating the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee in the spring of 2015. If it was truly a big issue, if it was truly a priority, they would have done that as soon as she found out about it. She wouldn't have had to take that long to even strike a committee. They sat on their hands for two years after receiving the final report from the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee in the spring of 2016 before tabling this piece of legislation. Again, Mr. Speaker, if it's a priority, where was the urgency? Where was the reality of them wanting to do something very quickly?

For three fifths of the Liberals' mandate, the last 10 years, the gender pay gap has remained unchanged. Now they've put forward this piece of legislation, which deals mostly with tracking outcomes rather than producing tangible results, as part of their cynical election ploy. This comes back to my concern about the compliance officers. If they're truly doing it—why are we not driving this to show what the tangible results are, as opposed to more stats about how many are in non-compliance and that type of thing?

In my long-term-care critic role, I've found, as I've toured the province, a very significant shift. It used to be that the compliance officers would provide guidance. They would be more like a coach. They would go into a facility and meet with the management, and they would say, "Here are the things that you could be doing better." They'd give them helpful tips. What I'm told is that the whole focus has shifted. Now it's punitive: "We're going to find you doing fault, and we're going to fine you."

The government has capped levels of funding for many years to our long-term-care facilities, making it doubly challenging for those operators to provide the proper care to the residents, which should be everyone's biggest concern. Now they're coming in and fining them, adding that financial burden to their operation already. If you're putting more money into paying fines, you're not putting it back into front-line care, the people who are there, the PSWs and registered nurses and registered practical nurses. All of the facilities are struggling with the challenge to have enough staffing resources. Yet here we're finding they're coming in a compliance—and that's the fear, and I draw the parallel to this piece of legislation, that that compliance officer is going to be punitive. They're going into businesses looking for fault, as opposed to putting the money that you could be spending—and I think of many of the bureaucracies that they've created—the college of skilled trades, the apprenticeship program—what was that one called when they put the new college together? They sent 100 inspectors out there for the college of skilled trades, was it not? They're going out there fining fines and they're looking for fault. Rather than finding ways to get more

apprentices and more people working, they're actually going in with that mindset of being very punitive. So I have a very big concern that this is a very similar situation, when I hear "compliance officer." Why wouldn't we call it a "compliance coach"?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: And then you wanted a dialogue.

Mr. Bill Walker: I would like dialogue, absolutely. I wanted to bring you into the discussion because you're a very knowledgeable person from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Speaker, so much of the substance of this act will be dealt with, as I said earlier, through regulation. It prevents members of the public from wholesomely debating it as it goes through the Legislature. We believe, in all cases, that something as significant as this, that they say is a priority—you would think they would want to have open dialogue, transparent dialogue and debate out in the community, certainly with the stakeholders first and foremost, and also here in the Legislature, to be debated by members of the Legislature, as opposed to allowing it to be done in the backrooms and forced on bodies that are not even aware of what's going to be coming, the ramifications.

It's very concerning, Mr. Speaker, again, that they are entering without a warrant. You would expect in any situation, I think, that people want to have some understanding that you're coming in and going to be investigating.

Again, this gets back to the punitive mindset. If you were truly sincere in wanting to create a better system and more opportunity, you would actually want to have, as my colleague just said, open dialogue and consultation. You'd want to have that dialogue with the employers who drive our economy. If we don't have employers, if we don't have businesses, who works out there? Who then pays taxes, if they are not gainfully employed?

That's the key that I see as different between the current Liberals' governing and our governing. We want business to actually be the economic engine, which is where it should be. We shouldn't be creating every single job within the government and building more bureaucracies, which are very costly. Again, if there's value, we are fully supportive, but at the end of the day, we have to have a plan to understand what that value is. What is going to be the benefit to the people of Ontario who are paying the taxes on something like this?

It creates the groundwork for an Equal Pay Day on a specific annual date that will be determined through regulations. Again, they don't even have that chosen. They can't even put that out in clear, unambiguous terms: "Here's where we're going. We have a plan. It's going to happen through consultation," rather than them ramming things through, like I've seen so many times in my years here.

During Ontario's Equal Pay Day last year, the 11th of April, 2017, the PC critic on women's issues reminded the Minister of Labour that the Pay Equity Act was unanimously approved in the Legislature on the 15th of June, 1987. Interesting: Future Premier Mike Harris was

the PC spokesperson who called for strong support of the Pay Equity Act in 1987.

Last spring, the PC caucus suggested the government work with the PCs and the NDP to create a special legislative committee that would sit over the spring and summer of 2017 to bring back to the Legislature—to the Legislature, not through regulation but through the Legislature—amendments to strengthen the Pay Equity Act so the Pay Equity Commission would have updated legislation and the financial resources to close the gender wage gap.

I think most of the people out there who are feeling that it's not in the appropriate manner now would rather see money going into the actual pay equity and the ability for them to receive more than going into a whole bunch of compliance officers. Again, I repeat: I have no idea how many they're going to have. I have no idea how big the structure to support that is. I have no idea how much money they're going to spend on this bureaucracy to actually do compliance, as opposed to paying people money to narrow that gap.

Mr. Speaker, a government that can find \$25 billion overnight to give a two-year hydro rebate—again, ironically, just before an election—can't find money to narrow the wage gap. They found \$4 billion that they moved off the books to say they balanced the budget, but they haven't found any money. In this budget, they're now going to find, through lending sources, \$8 billion. I wonder how far \$8 billion would have gone to narrow that wage gap. I have found it ironic, in my seven years here, that we continually find money for the things that are going to be serving the Liberals to get re-elected—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: And their friends.

Mr. Bill Walker: And their friends—as opposed to what's good for Ontarians.

I'm not certain how people out there, whether it be people, again, in my long-term-care critic role—33,000 people on a wait-list, but they found no money until this year, ironically. They put 5,000 new beds into the system, or they're suggesting they will. They also said they would redevelop 30,000 beds 15 years ago, and only about a third, if I'm kind, have even been started. Again, you said you were going to redo 30,000; you're at about 10,000. You now, in an election year, say you're going to build 5,000 more. Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, if I sound a little cynical that they are going to now find ways to do this in bringing it home and making sure that the legislation is enacted.

There are lots of promises, lots of headlines: "We will ... we shall ... we shall do better." I think I've heard that probably a million times in this House: "We know we should do better. We know we can do better." When am I going to see them do better? This is a prime example back to 1987: Mike Harris supported this, and now we're in 2018 and they are just now making it the big priority that they say it has to be, Mr. Speaker.

The second committee met over the course of five days last autumn. However, their last meeting was in September 2017. So for something that you would think

is a priority for, again, a government that likes to use the word "transparency" in almost every title they use, you would wonder: Why wasn't something put out in October 2017 to say we're going to address this? Why wouldn't it have been totally costed out? They were talking this morning about some other issues, that things weren't fully costed and weren't fully detailed. I'd like to suggest to them that it would be nice to see something as important as wage parity and wage equity fully costed out so that the people of Ontario understand, and particularly that those people expecting to be remunerated at that level would certainly be able to be compensated, and we know that the money's there. They can't just keep making wild promises, Mr. Speaker, without the reality of who's going to pay for it.

1350

We've got a new group of pages. Welcome to Queen's Park. I hope you enjoy your stay here. But the sad part is, Mr. Speaker, as you know as well as I, that every time they overspend, every time they go further down the road of debt, it's this generation that's going to pay for it. Right now, I wonder if any of these pages, in their studies coming here, know that the government of today has agreed to spend \$1 billion on interest payments every single month—\$1 billion. And that's at the lowest interest rates we've ever had historically, and they continue to dig that debt hole. So by the time you are our age, and even a little before, you're going to have challenges to be able to pay that.

What if those interest rates go up and that doubles? That's one of the fears out there in the economic community, that interest rates will rise. They always cyclically do. What if that doubles? That would mean we're spending \$2 billion a month, Mr. Speaker. Do you think that wage equity gap is going to get narrowed if we start spending that kind of money on interest payments? I do not think so, and I don't think that the people of Ontario think that either.

In a nutshell—I just want to review—according to the latest Statistics Canada data, women still earn between 78 cents and 97 cents to every dollar made by a man. The gap between how much women are paid and how much men are paid has only shrunk 10 cents since 1981. Yet this government again says over and over, "This is our priority." It's their priority because there's an election coming on June 7. That's why it is a priority, and I think they would all agree to that, although they probably won't nod yes when I look across the aisle right now.

So, for 15 years, Mr. Speaker—15 years—this government, which again in the headlines says, "This is a priority and we want"—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has the floor.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

They've had 15 years to address systematic gender-based pay inequity and nothing—nothing—until now; and right before, as I continue to say, an election the

Wynne Liberals are pretending to be champions of this issue after ignoring it for many, many years.

Now, with the election quickly approaching, they've put forward this legislation, but did they give it substance and will it do enough to close the gender pay gap? Will people in another four years be able to say, "Yes, it actually made the difference. It actually did get done"?

If we look at their track record, we were going to build a gas plant for \$1.2 billion, but we didn't ever build that gas plant, Mr. Speaker. They said they were going to have an eHealth system, and \$8 billion later there was no eHealth system. They didn't say they were actually going to sell Hydro One, a net revenue source for the province. They didn't say that at all before the last election but, ironically, they came out and also said, "With that sale we will balance the debt." Now, just in this House a couple of weeks ago, we talked about the budget, and they're now suggesting that for six years we're going to be in a deficit situation again, although in the previous budget they said, "We're going to balance for a number of years into the future."

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to sound cynical, but that's what the people in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across the province are referring back to me, saying, "You need to hold them accountable. You need to make sure that when they make those promises, they don't break them, that they don't come back later and say, 'Oh, we're sorry. We know we should do better and we can do better.'"

We need to hold them to account. They use the word "transparency" even in the title of this equity legislation, although again it's not even coming back to the Legislature. It's going through regulations, so they can pretty much write it the way they want it.

I want to reiterate in my closing statement that I think when you use the word "transparency," you should actually stand behind it and be held accountable. So let's consider the record on accountability and transparency: \$8 billion in eHealth; \$1.1 billion for cancelling gas plants; \$2 billion on smart meters that I haven't heard one person in Ontario yet tell me they feel they're smart meters; a \$4.5-million salary for the CEO of Hydro One, and I believe that just went up. In fact, they gave him a raise just two weeks ago of \$1.7 million extra, so he now makes \$6.2 million. The Minister of Energy said today, "That's because he's doing such a wonderful job and he has numbers to account"—well, I hope that it's 20 times better than it was if he's getting 20 times more than the Quebec CEO or the BC CEO.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: He got the bonus because he bought a coal plant.

Mr. Bill Walker: He bought a coal plant, yes. We hear all the time here, "We shut down coal," although it was Elizabeth Witmer from our PC government many years ago who actually shut down the first and made the legislation to shut them down. Yet this government comes out and, with Ontario taxpayer money, actually buys a coal plant in the United States. I'm not certain, again, how transparent that was. I'm not certain if they ever campaigned suggesting they were going to do that. I

wonder how each of them, when they speak about coal plants, actually can stand here and not actually feel that they're not being transparent and saying, "Oh, by the way, we bought a coal plant with your money." I haven't heard one of them agree and admit to that, Mr. Speaker.

Let's not forget that they have tripled the debt, to \$325 billion. So, back again to the pages in front of you, every single child in this country is born with \$22,000 of debt, and that's only getting higher. They've added another \$8 billion in deficit this year. Those dollars could be going to all kinds of things like wage equity. They could be going to long-term care, they could be going to hospitals; they could be going to the less fortunate; and those in social and community services.

So I find it very interesting when we talk about pay transparency. Tell us how much you've set aside in the budget. Tell us when it will be done. Put it in black and white that if you do not achieve that goal, if you do not do it—because you haven't in the last 15 years, even though you've said it's a priority. In this election, I hope at least you'll be honest with the people of Ontario. You'll put in black and white how much you're budgeting, when it will be done, and if you don't do it, then you will all resign because you were not transparent on something that you, again, are suggesting is absolutely a priority for your government—absolutely a priority—two months before the next election.

Let's not forget what they've done for the last 15 years in regard to wage equity and truly making a difference in people's paycheques. They've done absolutely zero, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, that's unfortunate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to offer some thoughts on the remarks from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I found interesting his reference to the 1987 passage of the Pay Equity Act. Certainly, when the Conservatives were in office here in this province, they did not apparently believe that enforcing the Pay Equity Act was very important because, 10 years after the passage of that bill, the Conservatives reduced in half the budget for the Pay Equity Commission, from \$6 million to \$3 million. That legacy, that cut that was put in place in 1997, has continued all of these years under this Liberal government. So I do agree with him that the Liberal government's new-found commitment to addressing the gender wage gap is highly questionable when you look at that history of funding decisions absolutely flat-lining the budget of the Pay Equity Commission.

Speaker, we have to remember that pay transparency really is an enforcement tool to be able to know how well the Pay Equity Act is working. The problem with the legislation we have before us is that it applies to a sliver of the employees who are bound by pay equity legislation. The current Pay Equity Act applies to all employers in this province with more than 10 employees. This pay transparency bill will apply, at some point in the future, to public sector employees; and then, at some other in-

determinate time in the future, may apply to employees who are at firms with more than 500 employees; and then, at some even more distant time in the future, may apply to firms with 250 or more employees.

This act will not achieve what it is supposed to do if it doesn't apply to every employer in this province, as the Pay Equity Act does.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to speak to Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act, and talk a little bit about the gender wage gap.

You know, Speaker, in Ontario women actually represent about 48% of the labour force and more than half of university and college graduates, but we know that there is still a significant gender pay gap. In fact, if you look at Ontario on average, the gender wage gap is about 30% and has remained largely unchanged over the last decade.

The Pay Equity Act is in place and it has applied. So you ask yourself: What are some other actions that we could take? In fact, the member opposite for Owen Sound asked, "What are you going to do about that?" Well, in the budget we actually did announce something that will be very helpful, which is the making available of free child care for all children from two and a half years of age up until junior kindergarten age, because that will help women get back into the workforce sooner and actually will be very helpful.

1400

But the other thing that this particular act does is that, if passed, it would require that all public job postings include salary ranges, bar employers from asking applicants about their past compensation and would also eventually require certain employers to record, report and post compensation data that includes gender and other diversity characteristics.

For people who work in the Ontario public sector, we already post salaries, at least for those over \$100,000. When you look at the public sector, the gender wage gap is much narrower than it is in the private sector. We need to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I want to add a few other thoughts into my colleague's comments on Bill 3. I'm going to start off by saying that, reading through this bill, one could only come to the conclusion that this bill is defective and that it is full of ambiguities and lacks any definition. I would also say that it relies too heavily upon an inappropriate delegation of authorities.

Let me give a few examples, Speaker, of the defective qualities of this bill. It does not define what an offence is under this bill. It speaks in generic terms that there can be offences, but it doesn't define what an offence is. Then, furthermore, to add to that defective element, it also doesn't prescribe what the penalty is for the offence where we don't know what is an offence. I have never seen a bill where we're being asked to vote on something

that only gives the ministry the determination of what an offence is and what the penalty would be.

We don't even know in this bill which employers will be subject to the provisions of the bill. We have no idea if it will be all employers, some employers, public service employers. It is full of generalities with no definition. It also fails to disclose what other criteria beyond gender may be subject to the provisions of Bill 3. How could we possibly look at this bill and not see that it is just a totally defective bill—much like this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting listening to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound explain his view of Bill 3. I would say that, in the beginning of his speech, I was in support of what he was saying.

The main thrust of what he was speaking about was: How can you, a few weeks before an election, say that something that has existed for the entire time the Liberals were in power—for the entire 15 years, pay equity has not moved. This has existed for the whole time and, a couple of weeks before an election, it becomes a priority. It's really hard to swallow; it's really hard to believe.

To make matters even more hard to swallow, it will start with the public service. To say that we want to publicly show the salary of the public service—Speaker, you can go on the website right now, click on their collective agreement and know exactly how much people are making. All you have to do is see what job classifications they are in. We already have this. If they make over \$100,000, their names are on the sunshine list.

So it seems like what the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound was saying is that it is lacking a lot before it becomes believable that this could have been a priority. If this was really a priority, it would apply—like everything else under the Pay Equity Act—to every employer with 10 employees or more. No, to the public sector, for which we already know how much they're paid and we already post their salary—this doesn't make any sense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound can now reply.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you to the member from Guelph, a former cabinet minister. I wonder, again, over 15 years—I thought they would have been able to have the ability to move some of this. That's a shame that that didn't happen.

The member from Nickel Belt: We speak a lot, mostly on health care issues, but I think she was kind of on the same page as me here. I think I heard her say that over 15 years, the Liberal government has really done no action on this, and that, again, it kind of sounds like it's a bit of an election ploy. It wasn't a priority for the Liberal government for 14 years. Now, just before an election, it is.

My colleague from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington always brings good thought to a debate. In this case, again, he's bang on. He used the term "ambiguity," and I think in the Liberal world, they use the word

“transparency,” but they’re nothing alike and they really leave you to start to wonder. He made a very valid, a very distinct, point about the lack.

Legislation is supposed to be unambiguous. It is supposed to be clear, concise, so that everyone understands. In this case, right down to the point of—it does not even define what an offence is. How do you bring legislation, how do you suggest you’re going to hire compliance officers when you can’t even define what an offence is? How does that person in business, who’s already under threat from increased hydro rates, more legislation, Bill 149—they’re sitting there, going, “What else are they coming at me with? You can’t even tell me what I’m going to be in offence of or what I’m not going to be compliance with.” It does not prescribe what the penalty is.

Again, I asked in my 20 minutes: How much are you going to spend on this? How many compliance officers? How much is it going to cost us to run this? How much money are you going to spend there versus what’s actually going out to people in true wage equity?

He asked what other criteria are going to be applicable. Again, no definition. How does the government expect the public to believe that they truly make this a priority when they can’t define what the actual criteria, what an offence is, or how much it’s going to cost to implement this, and if there is a defined timeline of when they will actually execute it?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I appreciate the chance to rise and speak to Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act. I am also very appreciative of the work of my colleague the member from London West, who is a tremendous advocate for fairness and women’s rights. She holds this government to account every day as our women’s issues critic, and spent her one-hour lead giving them excellent examples of how to ensure this bill accomplishes what it needs to. As much faith as I have in her, I don’t have in this government, but here’s another chance for the folks on the other side to challenge their government’s halfway approaches. I’m pleased to offer my two cents on this bill.

Tomorrow, April 10, 2018, is Equal Pay Day. What does that mean? Does it mean everyone gets paid equally tomorrow? Nope. Does it mean that people are paid equal to what they are worth? Nope. Equal Pay Day marks the day when women have finally earned as much as men, have finally caught up, and it means that, on average, women must work 15 and a half months to make what men do in 12. It takes us an additional three and a half months for women to catch up in Canada.

What is pay equity? Why do we care? What is the gender pay gap? What is pay transparency? Well, I’m pleased to have the opportunity to break it down for the folks at home. This is not another pay equity bill. The Pay Equity Act guarantees equal pay for work of equal value. Jobs that are of equal value in terms of the skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions must be

compensated equally, regardless of whether men or women are doing the work. Jobs that are done predominantly by women must be paid equally to comparably valuable work done predominantly by men. Fair is fair.

Also, the Human Rights Code protects workers from discrimination in all aspects of employment. It guarantees that women are entitled to equal treatment without discrimination. When it comes to workplace discrimination affecting pay levels, employment status or designed gendered boundaries and systemic discrimination that limits access to jobs, compensation, training or opportunities, we turn to the Human Rights Code.

I’ll get to the pay transparency part of this conversation in a second, but continuing to explain the legal framework for protections that we have for women and we have for workers, let’s look to the Employment Standards Act, which establishes the right to equal pay for equal work, with distinction based on sex. Recently, this right was extended to part-time, casual and seasonal workers, and to temp employees doing basically the same work as directly hired employees.

1410

Those are the basics that are laid out in law, which brings us back to pay transparency. Pay transparency is a tool that can help to promote pay equity. Pay transparency means that companies share broad information about who gets paid what. Some of what they have to report are what are the salary ranges per job classification, broken down by gender, and what are average salaries by gender per job classification. This allows people who are generally underpaid—for example, women, racialized workers and people with disabilities—to be in better bargaining positions for salary.

Pay transparency law also protects employees from having to disclose their previous salaries, again putting them in a better bargaining position, and protects employees as they may or may not choose to discuss salaries with one another. The idea is that exposing an employment setting’s gender wage gap will also help to empower workers and encourage employers to close that gap.

Speaker, I have, in easy terms, a bit about what pay transparency is and is not, from PayScale.com, and I’d like to read directly:

“Being more transparent about pay doesn’t have to mean posting everyone’s salary for all to see, though there are some companies that go that far. What it does mean is employees having an understanding of their company’s compensation philosophy, strategies and practices. What labour market is the company competing in for talent?... Is the company aiming to meet or exceed the competition when it comes to pay?... What is the range for your position at your company and where do you fall within it? How are raises determined/awarded?

“There are different levels of transparency and each company is going to fall somewhere along a spectrum, but pressure is definitely building for companies to become more transparent with employees about pay....”

Why does transparency matter?

"First, it can help ensure that workers are being paid equitably for equal work. If there are fewer secrets surrounding salaries, it becomes much harder for any pay inequities to arise. That's better for workers in terms of fairness, and it protects employers....

"Second, it builds trust. When employees feel valued, and aren't spending cycles thinking about whether they might be underpaid, they're more likely to be more fully engaged in their work....

"Companies that are truly committed to retaining and supporting their ... employees are going to move in the direction of more transparency."

Here at this Legislature, we have some transparency when it comes to what folks make. It's public record. I make the same amount as my colleagues on this side of the House. Nearly all of the government members earn more, but that is not gender-based, and regardless of what I think of it, it's public and it's trackable—which brings us to this bill, Speaker. We don't have pay transparency in our workplaces.

An interesting anecdote: A few days ago, I hosted a number of families at my office to talk about the mess that is the Passport system, the tangled system the government is using to distribute funds to families with adult children with developmental disabilities. I have no idea how the system works. Interestingly, neither do the workers in the developmental services sector and neither do the families.

Anyway, during the conversation, the families were sharing their stories and trying to help each other make sense of things, realizing that when it comes to money and entitlements, the government won't tell you anything. They make you figure it out on your own. You don't know what you're entitled to, you don't know what a fair amount is, you don't know how things are decided, and you don't know what any other families or children are getting. One father at this meeting, John, noted that it's like at work: You have no way of knowing what anyone else is making, so you don't know what you should be making or could be making. You don't know what's fair.

Well, Speaker, that's what we have here. Many employers don't want folks to know what others are making. In fact, they often penalize or punish anyone for asking, or for sharing their super-secret wage information.

This bill is called the Pay Transparency Act. It pretends to be taking this on, but it is weak and it misses opportunities, which is very Liberal of this proposed legislation. Also very Liberal is to do things halfway, or to not do things at all and say that they are.

Case in point: This government has announced that pay transparency will apply to the Ontario public service and later, after extensive—read "lengthy"—consultation—read "dawdling"—will be extended to employers with 500 or more employees, and later—whenever, maybe—to employers with 250 or more employees.

Well, (a) this undercuts the existing obligations in the Human Rights Code, Employment Standards Act and Pay Equity Act, and (b) the Ontario public service work-

ers are unionized, which means, as we've already heard, that employees are paid according to collective agreements, without secret wages. The workers already know what they are making, supposed to make, entitled to make and will make. That's the beauty of a collective agreement. There isn't a wage chart for men and a different one for women. There are grids for seniority and job categories, for example.

As a teacher, if I knew what year of a grid someone was on, then I knew what they made, and also, I knew that I was being remunerated what I was entitled to—well, until this government opened up the contracts and stole our sick leave and attacked our benefits. I forgot how awful this government has been. But if they hadn't actually kicked educators in the teeth with Bill 115, I never would have gotten involved with politics, so there is that. But I digress.

The Equal Pay Coalition does great advocacy work, and I have appreciated reading their submission called Strengthening Ontario's Pay Transparency Bill. I hope the government is familiar with it, but I'd like to read some of it to them, just in case they're paying attention.

According to the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition, "Pay transparency is an important enforcement tool used to buttress the existing human rights laws to help close the gender pay gap. Pay transparency promotes compliance by creating accountability for non-discriminatory pay.

"Women have the fundamental human right to be free from systemic sex discrimination in pay. A 'right' is just that—it is a legal entitlement that must be enforced. It is not a privilege. It is not an option. It is a baseline entitlement for every woman in the workplace.

"All employers in the province have had a legal obligation to deliver discrimination-free pay since the 1960s. But employers continue to flout the law.

"As reported by Ontario's Pay Equity Office, 54% of employers have gender pay gaps contrary to the Pay Equity Act even though pay equity has been the law since 1987."

Side note, not in their submission: In 1987, I was nine, so it's getting to be a little while ago, Speaker.

But back to this: "In 2016 the provincial Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee reported that the pay gap has not closed in 30 years.

"In its March 2018 Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy, the government acknowledged that 'The gender wage gap in Ontario has remained stagnant for the last decade, with women earning around 30 per cent less than men.' Canada's gender pay gap is the 7th largest out of the 34 countries in the OECD."

I'm going to continue, since they're still here and hopefully listening.

"At present, non-unionized workers do not know the pay structure in their workplaces. They can be disciplined and even terminated for asking about or sharing wage information. Yet, provincial laws require individual workers to file individual complaints to enforce their rights to discrimination-free pay. That right cannot be enforced ... if women don't know their employer's pay structure.

"Pay transparency remedies this defect.

"Pay transparency puts the onus on employers to disclose their wages to prove that they are complying with their existing legal obligations under Ontario's Human Rights Code, Employment Standards Act, and Pay Equity Act.

"Pay transparency in the form of mandatory disclosure of compensation information enables workers, particularly non-unionized workers, to know and enforce their right to non-discriminatory pay."

This is the re-introduced Bill 203. It has been newly numbered Bill 3—it's post-prorogation Bill 3—but it isn't what it needs to be to actually remedy the situation and deliver meaningful change.

Still from the Equal Pay Coalition: "Bill 3 is essentially unchanged from Bill 203. The act needs amendments if it is to deliver meaningful change. The Equal Pay Coalition calls on the Ontario government to strengthen the Pay Transparency Act to ensure that it makes an advance in securing robust, effective protection for women's human rights.

"The bill has left too much to be introduced through regulations to be designed by the Minister of Labour. Leaving key obligations to regulations undercuts the strength of the act and creates a democratic transparency deficit by cloaking key elements of the act to private consultations."

Speaker, we've just heard that there are some key priorities that need to be changed so that this bill accomplishes more than it does in its current state. How this bill can be applied is currently left to regulations. It always makes me nervous, when it's with this government, leaving everything to chance when we leave it to regulations.

It initially applies to the OPS, and then to large and then medium employers with 250 or more employees, but this act should apply to all employees wherever we find them—public or private sector, and small employers—to match the obligations under the Pay Equity Act.

1420

Additionally, the government contracts should comply with equality rights, mandatory timelines need to exist to file annual transparency reports with the Ministry of Labour and we need to require employers to deliver annual transparency reports to corporate shareholders, clearly set out what information should be in the transparency reports, including compensation structure and wage grids by gender, job classification and job status—like full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal and temporary—and include a clear purpose clause in the legislation.

This bill doesn't have any specifics, as I just mentioned, about the reporting and about what those reports will involve or what would be disclosed in those pay transparency reports. Why on earth would we leave those specifics to regulation? Put it in the act.

Speaker, I'm not a cynical person by nature, but after four years of sitting across from this Liberal government I think I'm a bit cynical by nurture. This proposed legislation is facing down an election and it's missing a

lot of its potential. I think it isn't a giant step forward for women, even though its title might make you think otherwise. But we have learned, time and time again about this government and their use of great titles. I think that something that is clear here is that everyone in Ontario can see right through this government, so there's a little bit of transparency there, I guess.

The proposed legislation doesn't even match the current obligations under the Ontario Pay Equity Act or even the planned federal legislation. Both of those apply to public and private sector employers with 10 employees or more. This Liberal version applies only to the public sector and, after much foot-dragging and consultations—or, as I said, dawdling—will eventually, hopefully, apply to employers with more than 250 employees. Ninety-five per cent of all employers in Ontario are small businesses and, according to the Ministry of Labour, they employ 28% of Ontario's workers. As Fay Faraday of the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition has publicly stated, "One hundred per cent of employers have an obligation to provide equal pay. The Human Rights Code doesn't carve out anybody. So there is no principle justification for restricting pay transparency."

This government hasn't even been able to ensure pay equity within the government after 15 years as the government. This Premier has refused to restore funding to the Pay Equity Commission. And since the Pay Equity Commission had its funding cut in half in 1997 by the last Conservative government, I don't hold out any hope that the Conservatives wannabes would remedy that or even be interested in paying women fairly for their work. Just a hunch.

Ontarians have to stop choosing between bad and worse when it comes to women's rights and opportunities. We need to see a properly resourced Pay Equity Commission. We want to ensure that more women in the public service move into leadership roles. We want to immediately implement the equal pay coalition's 12 recommendations to close the gender pay gap.

Women who do the work deserve the pay—equal pay, dollar for dollar, workplace by workplace. Speaker, I'd encourage you and all members of the House to not forget that April 10 is Equal Pay Day. Wear red and stand up for fairness and what's equal and what is right under existing human rights and pay equity laws.

We challenge the shortcomings of this proposed legislation. We want to see meaningful pay transparency in this province. We support closing the gender pay gap—not one timid Liberal step forward at a time, but with all Ontarians marching forward together to ensure that every woman and every worker is valued fairly and paid what they're worth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm pleased to rise and join in this very important debate. I think that we can all agree that the gender wage gap still unfairly disadvantages women across Ontario and every other jurisdiction.

I'm so pleased that our government is showing such tremendous leadership on this file. Then Now Next:

Ontario's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment is a first-of-its-kind strategy that works to reduce barriers and help women succeed in any path that they choose. As we all know, this ground-breaking legislation, if passed, would require all public job postings to include salary ranges and bar employers from asking applicants about their past compensation. It would also eventually require certain employers to record, report and post compensation data that includes gender and other diversity characteristics.

Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to the member from Oshawa. A few times she brought up the criticisms that the Equal Pay Coalition has made of our bill. I have a question for her and the NDP—actually, for all opposition parties. The Equal Pay Coalition has made a number of recommendations. I feel like some of them are being cherry-picked. My question to the opposition, both parties, is: Would you support all of the changes that the Equal Pay Coalition is recommending?

With that, I sit down, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Perth-Wellington and offer my comments on the remarks from the member from Oshawa.

We have heard about compliance officers, certainly, throughout this debate. We don't know how many they're talking about; we don't know what their jobs would be. Just from previous experience with compliance officers on other laws this government has brought forward, it seems to be a confrontational thing. They walk into your place of business and if they believe you're not doing something right they slap you with a fine right off the bat, it seems. This is what I've heard from some of the businesses in my area. Years ago, they used to try to work with people. They would come in and say, "You have to do it this way to be in compliance and if you start doing that, that's great," and that was the end of the story.

I spoke with a lady who worked for the government; she's retired now. She worked for the government for many years and she said, "That's the way it used to be. We were able to work with the people to enforce any laws or regulations." But then, in the last few years they've been told to fine them first and then let them go to court if they want to defend themselves in court. That's the wrong approach because that's adversarial and we don't want to be adversarial with the people we're working with or the government is working with. We should try to get along and make the environment that they're working in a better place to work. This is one of the things this lady said: She said that it just got to be hard to do her job because of what she was used to and what she was told to do by the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to commend my colleague the member for Oshawa on her remarks on the pay

transparency bill and the context that she provided for this legislation being brought forward today. She referred repeatedly in her speech to the work that has been done by the Equal Pay Coalition in this province. I will remind members that a year ago, on April 11, 2017, the Equal Pay Coalition came to Queen's Park and released draft legislation, pay transparency legislation, to close the gender pay gap. In releasing that legislation, they cited examples of a number of other jurisdictions. As policy-makers, it is a positive thing to look at what's happening around the world and to learn from those examples.

We know that in Quebec pay transparency applies to firms with 10 or more employees; in Iceland, 25 or more employees; in Denmark, 35 or more employees; in Belgium, 50 or more employees; in Australia, 100 or more employees; and in the UK, which is the weakest of these jurisdictions, it still was brought in to apply to 250 or more employees.

Instead of listening to the Equal Pay Coalition and learning from the experiences of these other jurisdictions, we see this Liberal government bringing in legislation that will apply at some undetermined date to the OPS only, and then, at some date far into the future from that, following an undetermined length of consultation with the private sector, at that point applying to firms with 500 or more employees, and then after that applying to firms with 250 or more employees. This legislation is just paying lip service to what really needs to be done.

1430

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to be able to speak on the comments. As we've heard, across this great province women represent 48% of the labour force and more than half of the university and college graduates, yet women continue to experience a marked economic disadvantage in our province—in business, in the workplace and in society. For example, the gender wage gap in Ontario is still, on average, about 30%, and has remained largely unchanged over the past decade. That is just not a good thing. It needs to change.

This gender wage gap still unfairly disadvantages women across Ontario and every other jurisdiction. It really is time to close the gender wage gap. It's time for a comprehensive plan that recognizes that economic empowerment isn't a quick fix and it isn't a one-size-fits-all. The strategy *Then Now Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment* is a first-of-its-kind strategy that works to reduce barriers and help women succeed in any path that they choose.

Our government has made important strides to support women and others who experience disadvantages in the workplace, and this will continue that work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments, and the member for Oshawa can respond.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to have the chance to answer some of what we just heard.

It's interesting to hear the criticism of the legislation. We certainly have some of our own. We'd like to know what those reports are going to look like. The details shouldn't be left to regulation. We would like to see some of those amendments come in, if not all. We have no way of knowing, because we haven't had committee yet, all of the amendments that will be coming forward. We're looking forward to being a part of that process. We hope the government will show up that day.

Remember that 100% of businesses have the obligation under the law to provide equal pay. This is not a new conversation. To the Conservatives: This is not a new thing at all. This started back in the 1960s. Then you had 1987 with the Pay Equity Act. Let's catch up. Let's do this.

When it comes to the Equal Pay Coalition, I'm glad to share their thoughts. But as the member from London West reminded us, they had brought forward draft legislation. When the government is asking what we support, well, you were handed a piece of draft legislation. Where did you put it? Pull it out of the drawer and actually take a look at that.

To the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change: To remind us about the gender wage gap being 30% and economic empowerment and "This isn't a quick fix" and all of these wonderful motives, that we're going to get there eventually—hurry up.

Also, when you've got the member earlier from Beaches—East York hollering at the PCs that they wanted to fix infrastructure first, and that's why we've been waiting, well, you know what? Women are part of the system, and we're not going to wait in line. You can decide to fix that first. You can make things equal, because welcome to the province of Ontario.

To the Minister of Seniors Affairs: If we go back to the 1960s, I bet she could ask some of the folks that she works with and is representing how things were in the 1960s and how far we haven't come here in 2018.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act. I think this is a very important debate we're having in this Legislature on Bill 3, but, through Bill 3, on an important issue around the gender wage gap, around issues around pay equity, and, of course, not only the empowerment of women but the role of women in our economy. Our economy is only going to be stronger if there's full participation by women in that economy.

I want to pick up where the member from Oshawa left off. I agree with her that this is not a new problem. This is a problem that has existed for some time, but I think the fact that we're still dealing with the problem tells us that this is quite a persistent problem. Different things have been tried at different times—things like pay equity legislation—but we are finding that there's still a wage gap. There is still a wage gap as it relates to the lines of gender, as it relates to women, especially women who have disabilities. The task for us, of course, as legislators,

is always to keep on top of these issues, to always make sure that we are not being complicit. Of course, we will try different things—and governments of all stripes have tried things, both at the federal and provincial levels—but if they're not working or if they're not taking us all the way we want, where women and men are paid equally, where women and men are given the same opportunities to do the same kind of work, then we need to take those very important steps to address those issues. That's why the Pay Transparency Act is an important piece of legislation, because it is taking that next step in Ontario to deal with issues around the gender wage gap.

Speaker, we've heard, I'm sure, from other members that this is part of Then Now Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment. It's a first-of-its-kind strategy that is working to reduce barriers and help women succeed in any path they choose. Other countries have done different things, and of course we learn from that, good or bad, but we need to make sure that we are taking steps here in our province.

This legislation, if passed, would require all public job postings to include salary ranges and would bar employers from asking applicants about their past compensation. It would also eventually require certain employers to record, report and post compensation data that includes gender and other diversity characteristics. This may, on its face, seem straightforward or simple, but in my view it's quite powerful. What we're talking about is something that I feel very strongly about: data collection. It is to make sure that we've got enough data and that that data, that information, is made publicly available so that you and I and our citizens can make a determination on what the information is, what that information means; and that if there are deficiencies that are identified or highlighted as a result of the information before us, we can take certain steps.

That's exactly, in my view, Speaker, what we're doing here today through this important piece of legislation: making sure that we are making public job postings with compensation so that everybody knows exactly what the compensation associated with that job is—not what people are getting paid, whether they are men or women. Of course, requiring the data based on gender and diversity characteristics allows for that additional layer that we need to put in place.

I just feel that this is an important, progressive step that the government is taking. I am confident that when we are speaking around issues of pay equity and the gender wage gap, this House—the House that I know and the House that I work at—will deem this as a non-partisan issue, because it is talking about 50% of our population and making sure that they are at the same level as everybody else in our province.

I also feel strongly that this strategy and this piece of legislation build very firmly on the work the government is doing when it comes to precarious employment, when it comes to the working conditions of people who are working in part-time, casual or seasonal work. We know the data demonstrate that most of the people who work in

those precarious work environments are women or are racialized. These tend to be entry-level jobs, where somehow people are paid less for the same kind of work that they may be doing if somebody was employed in a full-time position. Through Bill 148, the legislation that we brought and passed in this House, we have taken steps to ensure that we have equal pay for equal work—again, a very straightforward, simple concept, but a powerful one, because it doesn't exist.

1440

When it comes to part-time workers, casual workers and seasonal workers, it is important, given the fact that we know that most of them are women or racialized Ontarians, that you've got equal pay for equal work—not to mention bringing in a living wage of \$15 an hour, which is another very important and powerful step to ensure that the floor is much higher when it comes to employment and equality. Again, it would help those individuals who work on those jobs that tend to pay minimum wage to get a fair wage—a wage that will ensure for them to be able to live a decent or a better-quality life.

I look at this legislation in combination with the suite of things that have been done by this government, and Bill 148 is front and centre in that. I think that if you combine all that, you see that we are taking a very concerted step, a focused approach to dealing with issues around precarity of employment. We're taking on issues around the gender wage gap and we're taking steps around pay equity as it relates to women in particular and other underrepresented groups.

Once again, I urge all members to support this important bill. In my community of Ottawa Centre, I work with women's groups all the time, and groups who are working around eliminating inequities in our workforce and our work environment. This is one of the issues that comes up often, that we still live in a time and a place where the gender wage gap exists. This legislation, in my community of Ottawa Centre, is very well received.

The question is asked: How come we have not done this before? It's a fair question. The fact of the matter is that we're taking a concerted effort in terms of the work that we're doing around equal pay for equal work, the work we're doing around a living wage and also legislation such as pay transparency that we're debating today. All of that stitched together is going to result in meaningful steps, a meaningful manner in which we can ensure that everyone in our society is getting paid the same and has the same opportunities to succeed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's always a pleasure to rise for my constituents in Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. I've been listening to the government talk about the urgent need for this legislation—the urgent need after years of studying it. We've seen commissions reporting back years ago and sending it back to commissions again, but no action.

All of a sudden, when 81% of the people of Ontario are saying that they want a change of government, we see

these grandiose plans coming out in the budget. But at a time when the equal pay commission's funding from this government has never been lower than it is right now—if there is that seriousness, it seems to have come up all of a sudden. Where has this attention been for the last 15 years?

A lot of the issues we have are with our not-for-profits and government-funded organizations. Are they going to step up? They haven't been able to raise their salaries to compete because they haven't had increases for years. If you talk to them, they talk about laying off people as expenses go up. As I say, salaries go up, hydro goes up and rent goes up, so all they do is lay people off, and the waiting lists just get longer and longer.

We see a government that has created lists and lists of inequities. Pay is one of them, but also it's the time. People are waiting for their important services, whether it be for mental health or the developmentally delayed. These groups—I see parents and families coming into our office, and they really have some sad stories to tell as we see them waiting. They have an afternoon every month and a half or every six weeks, and that's not what we would expect living in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to offer some thoughts on the comments from the Attorney General about the pay transparency bill. One of the frustrations that I have shared in this Legislature during my lead on this bill is around this Liberal government's lack of connecting the dots. They have their women's empowerment strategy, they have their gender-based violence strategy, but nowhere do they acknowledge that women's lower wages—30% lower—make them much more vulnerable to sexual harassment in the workplace, and sexual harassment in the workplace makes them six and a half times more likely to leave their employment. So there is this vicious circle that is created because of the intersection of lower wages for women and women's vulnerability to sexual harassment.

We need to do a much better job in this #MeToo moment that we are having globally. We need to do a much better job of ensuring that sexual harassment in the workplace is eradicated. That in itself would go a long way to closing the gender wage gap. I have to say that in 15 years of this Liberal government, we have seen no movement on closing that gap. That gap has remained stubbornly stuck at about 30%. Now, in the weeks before an election is about to take place in this province, we finally see some sort of lukewarm legislation brought forward to try to close that gap.

Speaker, we need to have a much broader, much more coherent strategy if we are to be able to do anything to effectively close that gap. This legislation doesn't even acknowledge the best practices that exist in other jurisdictions that we should be learning from.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Laura Albanese: I'm pleased to rise and to add my voice to this bill. I want to start by saying that

women's economic equality should be a non-partisan issue. It's never too early, never too late, and we want to get this done before the next election.

I want to say that, in fact, it's good not only for women, but it's good for everyone in our economy when our daughters, our granddaughters, our friends, our sisters can have fair opportunities in the workforce.

I'd like to speak just a bit about the benefits of closing the gender wage gap for the economy and business in Ontario. Research shows that besides increasing women's economic security and creating more equitable workplaces, eliminating the wage gap would benefit the entire economy and individual businesses. A recent study by McKinsey and Co. suggests that if women were fully engaged in the economy, it would add \$60 billion to Ontario's GDP by 2026. That's \$60 billion. By closing the gender wage gap, the provinces could add between 4% and 9% to their GDP. Royal Bank of Canada estimated that personal incomes in Canada would increase by \$168 million annually if women had the same labour force opportunities as men. So it adds to the competitiveness of our businesses.

Research also shows that workplaces that establish gender equity are more likely to have a competitive advantage, attract highly skilled workers, reduce employee turnover and demonstrate better organizational and financial performance.

Mr. Speaker, this is not only the right thing to do for women; it is the right thing to do for the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Bill Walker: The Attorney General talked about the economy and investment. It's interesting that I don't see, again, any specific, tangible realities of how much money they're going to spend to do this, when it will be implemented. They found \$25 billion for a hydro rebate for two years. This is a priority, and they're talking about how much it could impact our economy, but in 15 years, I've seen nothing in there that showed a tangible result to actually lessen and narrow this gap.

It's interesting, when I hear those types of things being talked about—another \$8-billion deficit this year that is more debt being piled on, which means less money to be able to go out to front-line programs, services and things like this.

So I challenge the government of the day when they say these things. When they talk about the gaps, they say that they care, they say "fairness," but at the end of the day, it has been 15 years, and yet we still see no tangible, true results that are going to change that gap.

1450

The member from York South-Weston also said, I believe, "Get it done before the election." This will be my third election. Why didn't they get it done in the two previous elections, when they've been aware of it that long? She talked about eliminating the wage gap and how much impact it would have, so I wonder why the cabinet, particularly, and the members of the Liberal caucus have

not made this a priority in their 15 years, to actually make a difference in that gap.

We're 60 days out—70 days out, whatever the number is—to the next election, and all of a sudden this comes as a priority, this transparency. Why wasn't there transparency over the last 15 years, telling people what was going to happen and when? I use my example again of long-term-care homes. They said that they were going to do this, but there was no money in the last number of budgets for new long-term-care beds. But when we brought it to the issue, when we really brought it to the fore this year, they found money.

This one strikes me as a very similar thing. We're getting close to an election. It's something that they feel there's buzz about, so they bring it out. But what's truly going to hold them transparent and accountable? Will you do it? When will you do it? How much money do you have in the budget to actually make this happen within a defined time frame?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments.

The Attorney General can now respond.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to say thank you to the members from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry and London West, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for their remarks.

I will start by saying that just because an election is about to happen, it does not mean that we stop doing our work as a Legislature or as a government. That doesn't mean that six months before an election, we just pause, saying, "Oh, this may be categorized as, 'That was not a priority.'" I'm sure members in this House very much know how much quality work goes in before a piece of legislation comes to the floor of the House.

I hope the members were listening when I was talking about how there has been a concerted effort to deal with this issue by dealing with the kinds of issues that were laid out in Bill 148, like a living wage or equal pay for equal work, so that we can build on a foundation. These kinds of things cannot happen in isolation.

I agree with the member from London West when she says that we need to connect economic empowerment to workplace harassment as well. I would say to that that I have been elected for some time, and I can't remember any time in recent memory where more work has been done to ensure that we have safe workplaces, that we have safe homes for women—the work we have done in terms of the It's Never Okay campaign, the work that has just recently been done with the release of the gender-based violence strategy and Walking Together, a strategy for indigenous women and girls. All that work, as the member from London West says—and I agree with her—comes into play in this particular aspect, because it is not only to have a safe society but also to ensure that there's economic empowerment for women as well.

Under this Premier's government, we have been able to do all that work. It does all connect. It does ensure that

women have an equal role in our society and can help the prosperity of this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to join in the debate this afternoon on Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act, which was formerly Bill 203 before it was killed by this government's decision to prorogue the Legislature last month.

I'd like to thank my caucus colleagues the MPPs for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for their work on this file. They've been tireless advocates for fair labour practices and have provided invaluable insight and knowledge to our caucus.

This government has been very slow to address this issue. Forgetting the long tenure of the previous Liberal Premier, the current Premier waited more than two years after assuming office before creating the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee in the spring of 2015. Her government received the final report from that committee in the spring of 2016. Now here it is, a further two years on, and we are still debating related legislation—legislation which, in itself, doesn't represent much on a policy-wise basis.

I will echo the criticism of my caucus colleagues by saying that so much of the substance of this act will be dealt with through regulations that it undermines the credibility of the legislation and the government's commitment on this issue. It prevents members and the public from wholesomely debating it as it goes through the legislative process.

Frankly, this government's track record on this is not totally reassuring. Going by the track record of this government on this and similar issues, I think what many expect is a lot of lip service and sporadic action that happens to coincide with politically advantageous opportunities such as upcoming elections. This government is asking for a lot more credit than they deserve on this file, a lot more faith than they have proven themselves deserving of.

What we have here is a framework. It's difficult to debate and delve into a bill like this when we're just given the bare bones. We've seen a lot of these types of skeleton bills over the last few years, bills that hand off powers to ministers or to the cabinet. We're leaving all of the substance to be determined at a later date by regulation, at the pleasure of the individual minister. It's a real shame, because it's not a transparent process and it really undermines the work that we do here as elected representatives. This bill is about demanding greater transparency from employers, but the bill itself can't really be said to be all that transparent when so much is left to future regulation.

For example, we're discussing compliance officers in this bill, but it's really not clear what compliance will even entail. We aren't given an indication of how such compliance officers would operate or how many would be used. We can't evaluate if there are privacy concerns or discuss the scope of what their powers would be,

because we aren't given that information. We're just being asked to try to muster up enough faith to rubber-stamp the mandate of compliance officers, which could very well prove to be an expensive, invasive and unnecessary boondoggle.

It is with some regularity that I've complained about the lack of transparency from this Liberal government, as well as their apparent aversion to collecting or analyzing data to measure the implementation and outcomes of their initiatives. As critic for economic development, I've seen first-hand how Liberal attempts at engineering the economy can be implemented at the whim and convenience of government, with little heed for what is fair or even effective.

Of the billions of dollars per year in business support programs flowing from this Liberal government, we know that the minister is making no real effort to ensure taxpayers are getting value for money. Much of that money is spent with no public application process or criteria. Instead, the minister and the Premier hand-pick the companies that would receive the payouts behind closed doors by invitation only. They hand out grants to select companies that are, in effect, funded by the taxes paid by their competitors. Does that sound fair?

This isn't opposition spin; this is a finding of the Auditor General herself. Furthermore, the AG found that 96% of these economic development funds went to the oldest and biggest companies, and the government didn't bother to track outcomes from these programs, so there was no way to measure or verify that the money was accomplishing anything at all.

My point here is that we have already seen too much evidence that this government is not actually concerned with outcomes or even the real impact of their policies, which have consistently taken a back seat to PR and virtue signalling. It's difficult to believe that this government would put into place supporting regulations to this act which would represent a comprehensive and prudent course.

The Economist recently published a related article entitled "How to Narrow Britain's Gender-Pay Gap." I'd like to quote briefly from it because it's very much relevant to this particular piece of legislation:

"Many suspect that clear-cut sexism has given way to more subtle discrimination. Birmingham council was successfully sued for rewarding male-dominated work like street-sweeping more generously than female-dominated work like cleaning. However, quantifying bias with rigorous statistics is tricky, and made more so by the growth of the knowledge economy—it is harder to compare the jobs of two consultants than two factory hands. Politicians, courts and bureaucrats are ill-placed to compare jobs from afar, let alone to set pay."

I think the article raises an interesting point. Many jobs today are difficult to compare. The qualifications and value propositions of applicants to these jobs may be very difficult to compare. What applicants to these jobs want may vary widely as well. Some might prefer to be subcontractors and operate as a small business. Others

may be looking for a more traditional role in an office and on a payroll.

1500

On the employer side, we're increasingly seeing more creative compensation packages being offered, which offer opportunities for flexible work arrangements, profit sharing or performance-based pay.

Companies don't want to lose the ability to attract and reward high performers. I think there's a desire on both sides, employees and employers, to have flexibility when it comes to compensation, and we certainly don't want to infringe on that.

Compensation doesn't seem to be very well defined in this bill, and that is raising a number of red flags. A clear understanding of compensation is fundamental to interpreting this bill.

These are all factors that could determine the efficacy of certain pay transparency schemes, and that could create issues around interpreting the data that the mandate for pay transparency will yield.

There's a good story that I think is relevant to legislation but is relevant to this bill in particular. It's from Gloria Steinem's memoir, and I'll read this brief excerpt:

"I took a course in geology because I thought it was the easiest way of fulfilling a science requirement. One day the professor took us out into the Connecticut River Valley to show us the 'meander curves' of an old-age river.

"I was paying no attention because I had walked up a dirt path and found a big turtle, a giant mud turtle about two feet across, on the muddy embankment of an asphalt road. I was sure it was going to crawl onto the road and be crushed by a car.

"So with a lot of difficulty, I picked up this huge snapping turtle and slowly carried it down the road to the river.

"Just as I had slipped it into the water and was watching it swim away, my geology professor came up behind me.

"You know," he said quietly, "that turtle has probably spent a month crawling up the dirt path to lay its eggs in the mud on the side of the road—you have just put it back in the river."

"I felt terrible. I couldn't believe what I had done, but it was too late.

"It took me many more years" of organizing "to realize this parable had taught me the first rule of organizing.

"Always ask the turtle."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry; I'm going to have to interrupt the member to inform the House that a former member is present in the Speaker's gallery at the moment: the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London in the 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments, as well as Speaker in the 39th Parliament, our friend Steve Peters.

Welcome to the Ontario Legislature again.

Again, I recognize the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's great to have Mr. Peters here from the

neighbouring riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London to enjoy the riveting debate that's happening here this afternoon.

Speaker, I'm going to continue debating Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act, 2018.

We need to make sure, as we strive to ensure there is equality of opportunity and compensation, that we don't get sidetracked by certain things. We need to make sure that the best interests of employees are at the forefront and are honoured. I hope that consultation with employees, employers and stakeholders will be meaningfully undertaken as we go forward. This is one case where data alone could prove misleading, so it's important that front-line feedback is well incorporated in the policy process.

There's another, very recent article from the Economist that I would like to draw on here, entitled "Forcing Employers to Reveal Their Gender Pay Gaps Is Making Them Think." It gives an excellent explanation of the practical issues that arise when addressing the gender pay gap and why it's important not to conflate pay discrimination with issues around representation.

It begins with an analysis of the published results of large British firms on the gap between what men and women are being paid, and then goes to say: "The data do not adjust for employees' different roles, so chief executives are compared directly with secretaries. Mean gaps can be skewed by a few high-earners, as shown by the fact that nine of the 10 organizations with the greatest differences between their median and mean pay-gaps are football clubs."

This is a reference to the comparison of the wages of Premier League football players to the women in those organizations who are in the accounting department or are working the turnstiles, which is obviously a ridiculous comparison that arises from some instances of these surveys but which can nonetheless result in some very bad PR. It's a pitfall we need to be aware of.

This article in the Economist goes on:

"All this leaves plenty of room for spin, misinterpretation and counterproductive responses. Two narratives have emerged. The first is that the gaps prove how sexist and discriminatory the workplace still is. The second is that they are adequately explained by men's greater share of senior jobs, and have nothing to do with discrimination. Neither is quite right."

Again, Speaker, it's coming back to the interpretation of data, and distinguishing between pay discrimination and representation issues.

The article then delves further into different schemes for pay transparency, but from these concludes, "They should beware quick fixes. Companies could outsource low-paid administrative work, which would improve their figures overnight. They could also stop hiring junior women, who exacerbate gaps in the short term. Voluntary pay cuts by the best-paid men—as taken recently by some BBC stars—may be good PR, but they can create backlashes, as in Iceland a few years ago when some men's salaries were cut after equal pay claims by women.

"Many of the more sensible solutions take time and start with diagnosing what lies behind the numbers. 'I'm

concerned that this British reporting is ostensibly focused on pay, but in reality it's just about representation,' says Brian Levine of Mercer, a consultancy. 'What companies really need to find out is whether they are hiring equitably, paying equitably and are offering equitable opportunities to advance.'

"Men's and women's salaries start diverging from the childbearing years. This 'motherhood penalty' is often followed by the 'good-daughter penalty,' when elderly parents require care and daughters prove more conscientious than sons. The median pay gap is only 2% among full-time workers in their thirties, yet jumps to 14% in their forties and 16% in their fifties, according to the Office for National Statistics....

"Unlike Britain, many European countries tackling pay gaps have focused on discrimination between people with similar jobs, rather than gaps across whole companies. Nevertheless, Britain's blunter exercise is having an impact. The data have got board members, shareholders, customers and employees talking about pay. Now that the numbers are out, executives are keen to 'win,' says one consultant. Iris Bohnet, an economist at Harvard University, has noted a similar effect caused by awarding hygiene ratings to restaurants and putting energy-efficiency labels on white goods.

"If women's positions do improve, it will be hard to say whether it was caused by mandatory reporting or broader winds of change. In America, where" the President "has rejected a similar policy, companies nevertheless increasingly publish data on pay equality, often under pressure from shareholders. In Britain several accounting and law firms disclosed partners' salaries, though they were excluded from mandatory reporting.

"And within companies the case for diversity is increasingly made not in terms of PR but profit, as evidence linking diversity to performance mounts. McKinsey found that companies in the bottom quartile for gender and ethnic diversity in leadership were 29% less likely to achieve above-average profitability.

"Even if every company became scrupulously fair, the pay gap would endure as long as more women than men worked part-time and in industries that pay poorly. This prompts a question that is often overlooked: What size should the gap be? Theresa May this week said she wanted her government to end the 'burning injustice' of the gender pay gap. The injustice to aim at is not the lack of equality in outcomes, but rather in opportunities."

That was taken verbatim from an Economist article, as I mentioned at the beginning.

We have to make sure that we don't offer incentives for the type of unscrupulous quick fixes that the article mentions—like outsourcing low-paid work done predominantly by women or minorities, or not hiring from these demographics for junior positions—which would help a company to appear more fair, statistically speaking, but which would have adverse consequences for the very people we're trying to help.

What this article is really getting at, Speaker, is that this is a complex, multi-layered issue that needs to be

addressed thoughtfully and responsibly. It's an issue that is open to political exploitation, which can lead to the use of blunt-instrument approaches and short-sighted policies. I worry that that's what we see from this government, which hasn't demonstrated the level of commitment to this issue which most might assume, based on the rhetoric they use. I have yet to hear a good explanation for why funding for the Pay Equity Office is currently at the lowest level it has been in its 30-year history, for example.

1510

I understand that with the election looming, the government is moving to correct that with a 25% increase to the commission's funding. It's amazing how motivated this government has become on this all of a sudden. After 15 years of being in power, many of those years in majority government, free to bring forward these types of changes at any time, all of a sudden in the run-up up to an election they discover this will to act.

Speaker, it's really a shame that the people of this province are basically having to cross their fingers and hope that their own issues and interests happen to coincide with the best interests of this government. Unfortunately, even when they do and you're lucky enough to have this government put something in motion, you're still ending up with this jerry-rigged policy that isn't that all that definitive or thorough. It's either half-baked or flimsy, propped up with promises of more to come at a later date.

You know, Speaker, that same budget that says it will deliver more funds to the commission—that budget itself showed job projections for the future have been cut in half, from 128,000 new jobs this year to only 60,000 jobs by 2021. It also projects \$1 billion less in corporate revenues yearly, moving forward. I would like to say that it's important we address equal opportunity. It's also important that we address opportunity for all. We know there is a deficit of women and new Canadians in senior roles, in those higher-paying jobs, and part of the solution needs to be making sure that those good opportunities exist for those under-represented people to be able to pursue.

Speaker, I've heard from a lot of companies across Ontario that are struggling to attract and retain talent. They're having a difficult time finding qualified people for the jobs that need to be filled. The skills gap is something that our party has raised over and over again as an issue that needs to be addressed, so I think it's also important that as we discuss compliance and quotas and so on, we make sure we don't inadvertently punish or shame the good actors: the companies that are fair and equitable, but which are facing very real obstacles in the hiring process.

This bill doesn't stand alone, Speaker. It's coming into force alongside labour changes in Bill 148 and other legislation. All at once, the government is involving itself in the day-to-day operation of businesses in a pretty unprecedented way, so we need to be very mindful, as we move forward, about the impact this is having. We need

to keep a close eye on what really results from these changes and whether the measures actually prove to be effective and constructive when they're implemented.

We also need to make sure we aren't creating more unnecessary red tape. This bill will be working in concert with other pay equity legislation, including the Pay Equity Act and the Fair Workplaces, Better Workplaces Act's amendments to the ESA. Will this create the need for duplicate reporting? The reporting structure isn't clear. This government has already handed down a pretty significant financial and administrative burden to employers, so I hope this bill won't add additional red tape.

The bottom line is that I think we could have done a lot better with this bill. I think it's deeply unfortunate that the Liberals have sat on their hands for 15 years and are now just pushing through a skeletal bill because we have an election coming in 60 days.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: It always gives me great pleasure to be able to stand in this House to speak on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain and just to have a couple of moments to talk about Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act, 2018. This previously did have another number, but as members of this House would know but the viewing public may not, this bill died in its previous version due to the Liberals proroguing not so long ago and then bringing it back again.

It was interesting: Before they did prorogue, the government was bringing forward motions that really didn't make much sense, when they could have actually been putting the time and energy in committee and into debate here in this House to getting legislation like this through. The legislation is not what we think is enough to ensure that women are getting their fair share of pay here in this province. We know that the pay gap is still 30% and that it has only narrowed 6% since the late 1980s. That's shameful. This should have been done a long time ago. It's unfortunate that we're still here, that we're still seeing pay equity not being met by the government's own legislation. They put pay equity into force, and we see government agencies struggling every day just to make up that pay equity. We're still so far behind in ensuring that that's in place, and now we have new measures in place that we don't even know how are going to be enforced.

The member who was speaking, the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, talked about not knowing why—oh, I've lost my time, but it was the Conservatives who cut the funding for the Pay Equity Commission—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Questions and comments? The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. I'm new to the role. It's been almost three months now, so I don't say "new" anymore; I say "newish."

But I'm delighted to join the conversation this afternoon on Bill 3. You know, Speaker, this should not be a partisan issue. Gender equity should matter to all of us,

and I hope that we're going to have support from all parties on this particular matter.

I speak with, I'll say, some authority. I have some lived experiences in this matter. I can recall, when I began as a news journalist well over 30 years ago, that there were male colleagues who I knew were earning more money than me. We were doing the exact same job and yet we were getting a different paycheque. I approached a boss one time and asked about this, and he said, "Well, that gentleman is earning more money than you because he's got kids at home and he has to support them." I didn't have the nerve to say it at the time, but I really wanted to say, "Well, gosh, I thought we got paid for what we did when we were at work, not at home in our private lives."

I believe that gender equity is important. Pay equity is important. This Pay Transparency Act is going to be a new tool in our tool kit that is going to promote workplace equity. It's going to help us to shine a light on unwarranted pay inequities.

Speaker, women's economic equality should be a non-partisan issue. I hope that both opposition parties are going to support us in this as we move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Our presenter, the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, concluded by saying that the government could have done better and could have done this sooner. He talked about 15 years of sitting on their hands; as I understand it, for the last 10 years there really hasn't been any movement with respect to the gender pay gap, with respect to a more equitable situation.

I'm intrigued that the legislation, I suppose, but certainly the regulation, perhaps, would set the stage for what's being referred to as Equal Pay Day. Of course, I've always stood for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and equal pay for equal work. It does open discussion, really, with respect to equal pay for equal work, and I think it is important to look at the comparables.

For example, to take a look at the remuneration, when we talk about pay, we're talking about pension, benefits, vacation time and so many other factors with respect to one's compensation, and I think it is important to ensure that we have equal pay between somebody doing a certain job in the public sector and another person doing exactly the same work in the private sector. For example, if someone is working in a kitchen in a correctional facility through the ministry, are they making more money, have they got a better deal, let alone a pension, compared to somebody working in a kitchen in the private sector? To me, that's what equal pay is all about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise to offer some thoughts on the remarks from the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex about the pay transparency bill. Certainly he makes a good point about the fact that the Liberals have had 15 years to do something about this issue and

have dragged their feet and have waited until now, on the eve of an election.

1520

He also makes the point that the Liberals have not invested any significant funding into the work of the Pay Equity Commission, which is, really, the body that is mandated to enforce the Pay Equity Act. What he didn't mention was that the current low level of resources that is allocated to the Pay Equity Commission is because of the actions of the previous Conservative government, which cut in half the funding that is provided to the Pay Equity Commission, from \$6 million to \$3 million. The Liberals have been quite happy to maintain the Pay Equity Commission at that level of funding for all these years that they have been in office.

Speaker, it's good, I guess, that they're bringing forward this legislation. Certainly, we, on our side of the House, have raised a number of concerns about the limited application of this legislation. It's going to apply, at some point, to the public sector initially, and we can already get the information about pay bands from collective agreements—but whatever; that's what's going to happen. And then, at some point after that—we don't know when—it's going to apply to firms with 500 or more employees. And then, at some point after that, whenever that might be, it's going to apply to firms with 250 employees.

Speaker, there is a lot of uncertainty about this legislation and a lot that is left to regulation. The women of Ontario deserve more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments.

The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex can now respond.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's been an interesting afternoon, listening to the debate on Bill 3. I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her riveting response. Her time wasn't cut off soon enough; she got that dig in on a previous government and a previous, previous, previous Premier. I'd like to thank the “newish,” as she called herself, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the member for Kitchener Centre—congratulations on that appointment, by the way—of course my great colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk, and my neighbour from London West for adding comments.

Like I said, Mr. Speaker, they've had 15 years to deal with this. They never increased funding to the commission. We all know why we're debating this legislation today and, I guess, over the next number of days: It's because there's an election coming on June 7. If this was a priority for this government, they would have done it years ago. As I said in my 20-minute remarks, they had, for most of those 15 years, a majority government, and they chose to do nothing.

We know what this is about. It's like a number of other promises that they've announced in the last number of months. It's about June 7, 2018, and trying to retain power—desperately, I might add. Quite frankly, the people of Ontario are seeing through this. We hear it—

the last week, as we were all back in our ridings. People aren't buying the promises that this government is promising. That's why I think, on June 7, we're going to see a change in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one-half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader or his designate specifies otherwise.

I recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Laura Albanese: No further debate, Mr. Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TRANSFORMATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA TRANSFORMATION DES SERVICES CORRECTIONNELS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 29, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation / *Projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2018 sur le ministère de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels et la Loi de 2018 sur les services correctionnels et la réinsertion sociale, apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois et abrogeant une loi et un règlement.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate on Bill 6? I recognize the member for Essex.

Applause.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues for that wonderful ovation.

As always, it is an honour to rise in this House on behalf of my constituents of Essex and our party—the New Democratic Party—our leader, Andrea Horwath, and the people of this province. The bill is Bill 6, the Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018. From the outset, on the surface of this act, I'll let my colleagues know that New Democrats support the thrust of the act, and we most definitely accept the need for an overhaul in corrections in Ontario.

Why can I state that categorically at this moment, at the beginning of my one-hour lead? It is because, unequivocally, the state of our corrections system and our probation and parole system in Ontario is in crisis. I want to thank all of the front-line corrections and community safety and probation and parole officers who work in our communities day in and day out for not only the work that they do in keeping us safe and enforcing the rule of law, but also for bringing attention day after day,

relentlessly, to this House and its elected members about the crisis that exists in corrections.

I will give a shout-out to just a few of those whom I've leaned on quite heavily to gather information and to learn more about the crisis and about some of the remedies: first, Smokey Thomas, president of OPSEU; Chris Jackel; Randy Simpraga; my friends Jack Bene and Sarah Bene—Jack is a corrections officer; Sarah is a probation and parole officer—and Danielle Du Sablon, who is a probation and parole officer.

They are dedicated to the work that they do. They are dedicated to providing safety and security for our communities and also for the people whom they are trusted to guard. As guardians and as custodians of those who are in the system, they are the closest to the issues. If I can quote Chris Jackel from a couple of weeks ago, when he joined Smokey Thomas in their press conference here at Queen's Park: "Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution." That means listening, learning and applying the resolutions, the programs and the policies that should be born out of that knowledge, out of that literal institutional knowledge that those front-line workers have about what the issues are that have created and have led to the crisis in corrections, but also can potentially alleviate the issues.

I want to thank them and I want to acknowledge them and offer our word that New Democrats will continue to work, and our commitment that we will continue to work with them to find a solution, to continue to work to make our system better, to make it so that those front-line workers are safe at work, first and foremost, and that inmates not only are able to safely do their time but also reintegrate into society effectively. I think that's a system that requires a holistic approach where multiple ministries, multiple parties and those who are on the front line work together in a cohesive way.

That's what those front-line workers, those corrections officers and probation and parole officers, are asking for. They've been very transparent about the status of corrections in our province. That's hard to do because it requires those professionals to look in the mirror, to analyze their workforce and workplace and to be very critical, open and transparent about what some of the negative aspects are of their jobs. In some instances, corrections officers have had to explain and talk about some of the effects that they have felt—some of the negative effects. They have had to talk about attacks on their own person or on their colleagues, or about things that they've seen inside facilities that have affected their psyche, where inmate-on-inmate violence occurs, or drug overdoses or death or suicide.

1530

Despite how hard it is to talk about these issues, I think you will find that if you talk to a corrections officer or to a probation and parole officer in Ontario, they are willing to tell their story because they know that's the only way that this issue is going to rise up from the deep recesses of society.

I've had two terms as our party's corrections critic, and what I think is a constant is that, in society and in

Ontario—maybe this is the same across the country—when you go door to door and you talk in your neighbourhood Tim Hortons or community centre, the status of our corrections and community safety system isn't top of mind. It isn't really the big-ticket item that folks talk about each and every day.

Unless you are intimately involved and have been, unfortunately, a part of our penal system or our criminal justice system, then you don't really give it too much thought on a day-to-day basis. You know that it exists and you hope, I think, as a member of civil society, that it works adequately and that the programs and the services and the resources are there to ensure that, again, if someone is found guilty of a crime, they are able to do their time and are also able to effectively be reintegrated into society, because the vast major of the inmates who are in our provincial system, in short order, will be back into our communities.

If we aren't effectively ensuring that there, are programs that address some of their issues, whether they be mental health issues or whether they be drug, alcohol or addiction issues or socio-economic issues or training or education, we're going to see, and we have seen, a high level of recidivism. In fact, Ontario leads the way when it comes to repeat offenders. We have the highest rate of repeat offenders in Canada. That is not a distinction that I think the province and this government should be proud of.

The symptoms of that factor have been evident for quite some time. It's a government that has been bent on austerity, that has cut vital services and resources to our front-line public services, specifically corrections and probation and parole officers, and that has exacerbated the issue by not ensuring that the capital resources have been put in place to bring our facilities up to standard. Bricks and mortar make a difference. When you don't have a facility or you have a facility that was built a century ago, that doesn't facilitate the programming of the 21st century. That's concrete walls and bars. We have evolved.

The data is there, the science is there in terms of programming and resources. I'll say that a lot throughout my speech, Speaker. We know that we can effectively support those who find themselves in the criminal justice system with comprehensive programs. Our corrections and probation and parole officers are on board with that. They don't want to see these people coming back into their facilities every month, every week, every two years. They want to see people come in, understand that what they did was wrong, that they can change their ways, that they can be a productive member of society, but they are not given the resources to do that. They are given the bare-bones resources: simply, custodial services. That's a shame, because we are doing a disservice to the profession and we are doing a disservice to our society and to our communities.

Here we are, on April 9, 2018. I don't know exactly what the start date is of the Liberal government's tenure in this House as the government, but it's somewhere

around 15 years ago—15 years, and we are now at crisis level, and in a crisis situation, in our corrections system. That is symptomatic of 15 years of neglect, 15 years of not prioritizing the needs of the system, 15 years of, really, a degradation of that system and of those who serve the system.

We called it. We told them, “You’re not actually adding the appropriate resources and services. What you are doing is cutting, to the detriment of the entire system.” How do we know that? Well, we have massive overcrowding in our provincial facilities. We saw that in Ottawa, where inmates were made to sleep in shower stalls; there was that much of an overcapacity of space. We saw incidences of the use of segregation, whereby the most famous case involved a gentleman named Adam Capay, who was in segregation for four years. That’s 1,560 days. That’s 52 months—52 months without anyone raising a red flag and saying, “This is not the system that we need in Ontario.” This is not a system that is going to reform inmates, nor is it a system that is humane in any way, but it is the system that has been built by the Ontario Liberal Party and by the government of the day.

That precipitated the Sapers report on corrections reform. We certainly accept and recognize the need for the Sapers report and thank him for conducting that report, because it shone a light on this situation, independent of those who are involved directly, and really highlighted the fact that there’s a drastic degradation in the system.

I’ll tell you that today, as much as we are supportive of, again, the initiatives in Bill 6 and the reforms that it puts into place—and I’ll talk about that later—as much as we support this initial thrust, 15 years after the fact, this will not solve the problem; it categorically will not solve the problem. Why, Speaker? Because this government not only did not recognize the need for additional resources—front-line probation and parole officers in our communities and corrections officers in our facilities; it didn’t recognize the need to upgrade facilities in the legislation. It didn’t even talk about it, nor did it talk about it in the throne speech. That’s indicative of a government that is going to—I think if we look at past behaviour, we will see that they will continue to do everything they can to keep the issue under a cloak of darkness. And that does a disservice to our society.

What we’re talking about here is one of the more fundamental aspects of our criminal justice system in Canada. We have had a criminal justice system since Confederation, and it’s one that we will always, I would argue, continue to have to have, but we can no longer apply 20th-century resolutions and priorities to a 21st-century system that requires a lot more resources than the government is willing to put in. This is something that is fundamental to a civil and cohesive society.

So what can we do? We can first, I think, as a government, acknowledge quite clearly—and I’d like to hear the words from this government: that they acknowledge there is a crisis that exists, that they see the burden on our probation and parole officers who are in our commu-

ities, who have caseloads that are just unmanageable. I’ve met with them; I’ve talked to them. They have opened themselves up frankly. They are stretched. Yet the solution is quite clear: They need more bodies on the ground. They need more caseworkers. They need more probation and parole officers. Some of these officers have caseloads of up to 80 or 100 active cases. These are individuals that they need to follow up with, that they need to ensure are accessing adequate programming and that they are following the terms of their conditions of release.

1540

How do you do that juxtaposed with an ever-increasing bureaucratic burden on them to report a massive amount of information back to management? That wasn’t the case before. You had sort of a hands-on, person-to-person connection as a probation or parole officer for someone who was on probation, and it was a literal relationship. They were able to confide in some of the challenges. They were able to be a resource and also be a measure of oversight. That gets harder and harder as this government layers bureaucratic hurdle upon bureaucratic hurdle on them to be able to effectively do their jobs. That’s just the plain truth of the issue. It’s as simple as that.

If you are going to, as a government, have more administrative work on individual probation and parole officers and add more caseload to them, either you expect the oversight and the work that they do to be sort of diminished and you expect that they are not going to be able to provide that oversight and you are okay with it, or you really don’t care and you are doing the bare minimum. I would say that both are true in this case.

So what does it require? It requires, again, a really transparent and open view of what that system is. I haven’t seen that from this government. I haven’t seen them talk about some of the failures and where they absolutely missed the mark on the system.

Speaker, what the reality is of corrections officers in our communities, in our institutions today, is that years ago, on average, you would hear of an inmate-on-CO interaction, or a violent interaction, maybe once, twice, a handful of times a year if it was one of the larger facilities. Now we have incidents on a daily basis where corrections officers are attacked, where they are punched, where they are kicked, where they are threatened. They have feces being thrown at them, bodily fluid, verbal abuse—a whole host of physical and psychological altercations. These folks understand that they are performing a job that has some inherent safety concerns. They are dealing with sometimes very violent populations. But now they are dealing with a massive amount of inmates that have diagnosed mental health issues.

Why is that, Speaker? Well, it is because, again, in tandem with a lack of resources and a lack of investment in programming in our corrections facilities, we have seen that decrease in investment in mental health supports in our communities. Any of the members of this House, I am sure, who have met with their local mental

health professionals and those who work on the front lines in mental health and addictions know that we are also at crisis level in supports for those folks in our communities. It compounds the issue.

Years ago, this government made a lot of talk, a lot of hay, about the fact that we were deinstitutionalizing mental health services in Ontario. I think the principle is correct, is right. We absolutely have to find more community-based programming and supports. You simply can't warehouse people, nor is it humane to warehouse people who have mental health issues. But instead of actually resourcing the supports in our communities to ensure that they are being helped, we've simply transitioned the institution from a mental health institution to a penal institution. You've not done anything. In fact, it's getting worse.

You see these high levels of interaction on inmates, on officers; inmate-on-inmate violence is escalating. Inmate-on-nursing-staff and inmate-on-health-care-staff violence is escalating. None of the legislative prescriptions in this bill—none that I can find—will alleviate that problem. You're not giving the tools to our front-line workers in those facilities to protect themselves. That's a big failure, Speaker. That's a huge failure.

I cut my teeth in health and safety in the labour movement and in my former workplace in construction. It was our paramount concern. When you walk on a job site, the first thing you do is you're going to do a tool-box talk and make sure that you identify the threats and the things that could harm you. You identify them, you isolate them, you protect yourself from them. That's the number one job and it should be the number one priority of this province and the elected members of this province.

When it comes to corrections, it seems like there has been a blind eye turned to this issue. I don't know what the rationale is. Maybe it is the underlying perception of corrections where it just exists over here in the deep, dark recesses of society, and if we just don't give it too much thought people won't really give it too much thought either. That, again, is a failure of the responsibility of this government. It is not the society that I want to see. It's not the trajectory that I want to see my province take. I want to see them do the job, the work, and apply the resources that are needed. That's the right thing to do, but it takes guts and I haven't seen that, certainly, in my tenure here.

What are we hearing from our officers? What can help them? Well, number one, our officers are understaffed, in tandem with those who are in the communities, our probation and parole officers. When you've got an overcrowded system, you need more front-line officers in those facilities to guard the inmates, to guard themselves from inmates and to make sure that the system works adequately. They're not seeing that.

The government has touted a hiring spree of over 2,000 new COs, but in reality, Speaker, if you talk to members of OPSEU and those front-line corrections officers, when you whittle down that number of 2,000, they don't know whether those are full-time or part-time.

The actual impact is around two dozen new hires who have entered into the system and who are able to add support to the already overburdened system. That's not enough. That is not enough, Speaker.

What they're calling for is a really frank conversation with the ministry, to sit down and come up with a data-based approach to identifying exactly how many brand new, additional members to the complement they can get. That number, I don't think, is unattainable. I think it's a number that this government not only can afford to do but also has a responsibility to do. I've heard of numbers around 300 to 400 across the province. When you look at a system that houses up to 8,000 inmates at any given time, that ratio certainly makes sense. There's a whole host of downstream costs, if we don't do it right at the point of entry and in that term of sentence, that just recycle back into the system. This is one of those expenses that can pay for itself if you really are transparent about what the costs are to our society. It's a cost that I wish parliamentarians, legislators and governments would be truthful about to our communities.

1550

When we get on the doorsteps—and I look forward to it—I will be able to explain the costs and why we need to invest in this system. Our communities will understand that. I think it's not beyond their grasp to understand that this is something that has to be a priority, but it requires the government to actually—I'll say it again—have the guts to do it.

Here's another factor and a figure for members to consider: In 2010, there were 321 reported acts of assault in our corrections facilities in Ontario—inmate-on-inmate, inmate-on-CO or others who work in the facility. From January to June 2017, a six-month period, there were 677. Aggregate that, double it, and you're upwards of 1,300 now. That's a four-times multiplier in incidences of CO assault.

Things are not getting better, Speaker. Despite all of the great talk and chest-beating of the government, they have not effectively solved the crisis in corrections. It is getting worse.

So we point to this initiative in Bill 6: Will it support the decrease of violent inmate interaction? Again, I don't see the resources.

I will ask the question to the government, to whoever is going to follow up on my one-hour lead: Where do you see that this legislation will effectively, immediately and strategically end inmate-on-inmate violent interactions? I don't see it because there are no explicit resources that are identified in the bill. That may be something that they're leaving as an election goodie, something that might come out during the campaign, on the campaign trail, but this is the place to do it. I would say that sometimes it's better late than never, but it isn't in this case. You've never done it, and I don't think that you're actually going to do it, because you had 15 years to start to remedy the situation and you haven't done it so far.

Our trust in this government and its initiatives and its legislative priorities is not there, and that, I think, goes

for those who work in our communities in corrections and probation and parole, and those who are affected, as well.

Speaker, I've talked about the fact that those who are closest to the issue are closest to the solution. When you listen to their stories and you hear the impacts of their working conditions, it can only shock you that this is Ontario in 2018. This is a government that has a penchant for making huge announcements, big-ticket announcements, and yet when the solution is so clear and evident in front of them, they're reluctant to actually put in the effort and the political will to fix the problem. I wonder why. It boggles the mind that a solution could be so clear, yet a government is so far away from it.

We'll continue to press this government. We'll continue to work with our front-line workers in this field and in this industry. But until we have a government that is actually ready to put the resources forward, that has the tangible benefits of alleviating inmate violence, supporting mental health programming and ensuring that health care services and the resources—meaning nurses and doctors, the staffing levels of complements of those staff—are adequate, we can't really trust that they're going to do the right thing.

Speaker, I can only tell you that New Democrats understand the principles of listening to those front-line workers, whether it be in corrections and community safety, or probation and parole, or nursing or health care or education. Sometimes the government doesn't know best. Sometimes it takes some humility to get down into the weeds of the issue, acknowledge some of the problems that potentially you yourselves as a government have created, do the hard work to fix it and be accountable and open with your constituents. We're prepared to do that, because that is the only way we're going to get to a solution and to a system that works.

What are some of the issues? Well, let's talk about this bill specifically.

The bill overhauls the rules governing the corrections system. That general statement is a welcome statement. It's one that we think should continuously be reviewed and should have light shone on it all the time, because if not, it falls to the wayside of the top-of-mind issues of the day.

I have to acknowledge those who are on the front lines who have relentlessly pursued this issue, who have gathered at Queen's Park month after month, who have done lobby days here to inform members of all parties about this, and who I know are not going to give up, because they believe in a system that can work. They know the costs. They are taxpayers themselves, Speaker; they understand the value of a dollar. But they also understand that that investment into our corrections system can yield positive results on the outside—in our communities, in our health care system and in our economy—and they play the most pivotal role in ensuring that that happens.

We support this initiative, which is going to make small steps towards some reforms to the system, but overall, this is a superficial sort of approach. It does a

couple of positive things. However, there's an underlying issue: that only a comprehensive approach to the resources that we put in will fix the problem.

As I stated, the legislation is largely a reaction to the findings of the independent adviser. The main reforms here relate to the use of segregation and to the establishment of an inspector general's office with an independent ability to conduct systemic investigations. It sets out the minimum standards of living conditions and standards of confinement.

Again, April 9, 2018: We have incidents of inmates living in segregation for up to four years, without any record of that happening throughout the four years; we have incidents of inmates having to be housed in shower stalls; and we have this now today, to address the issue, four weeks outside of a general election. You wonder why it took so long and how we could get here.

The reforms to segregation limit the restrictions and the conditions of segregation, including setting a cap on consecutive days allowed at 15. This is consistent with the recommendations of the special adviser on corrections' report, and recent federal restrictions in place, as well as recent international standards for the administrative detention of incarcerated persons, which include that no more than 60 days' total would be permitted in a calendar-year period. This presumably is motivated by the political fallout from the four-year-long incarceration and segregation of Adam Capay.

1600

I'm going to take a drink of water. That was good.

Speaker, the corrections officers have long understood that the use of segregation without adequate guidelines, principles and reforms was something that had the potential to be abused—abused but also without, again, the oversight and the accountability and the resources. Imagine the conditions that require putting an inmate in segregation. What leads to an inmate actually being put into segregation? Sometimes it's voluntary segregation because the inmate feels threatened by other inmates because of their situation, whatever the conditions are. That's something that the bill talks about as well.

But sometimes, and with limited resources and limited tools at corrections officers' disposal, segregation is a valuable tool. It is one that they use to support the safety of themselves, their colleagues and other inmates. The government has done a pretty terrible job in acknowledging that that is one of their limited tools. That's one of the things, the last course of action, that they have to actually protect themselves, without any other resources, without interventions on the inside that can identify persons who are at risk of volatile situations or at risk of harming themselves or other people. Again, skeleton crews inside these facilities—and if you've ever had the chance to tour one of our provincial facilities, I urge you to do it if you haven't done it. It is an eye-opener.

Mr. Randy Hillier: There's a bunch over there that should be in there a long time.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, I knew that was going to come out. I knew that was going to happen.

Go ahead. Spend a night in the clink.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I've been there. I've been there.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I believe it.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, we do.

But in all seriousness, it's important to get a visual perspective of what that job is, and the challenges that arise from working inside a corrections facility, especially if you look at the contrasts between an older facility and a newer facility, in terms of the resources and the systems that are in place. I'll tell you, from my experience, newer facilities make it a lot easier for the movement of inmates, for the adequate programs that need to be delivered inside those facilities. That's just what society, I think, has come to today. We understand that these facilities have to be more than just bars and locks. They have to actually support some of those programs and the delivery of them.

You go to an older facility, Speaker: leaky roofs, inadequate heating or ventilation, no natural light in these facilities, buildings that are literally crumbling, not the best access for transportation between court—you know, inmate transfer. Security concerns—let's talk about that—where contraband is a real problem. In this day and age, we have just an enormous amount of ingenuity that comes from the criminal element to get contraband inside facilities, and outside of facilities. This is another role that corrections officers have to play, day in and day out.

Believe me, Speaker, they are not prone to wanting to do full searches of inmates. This is not a good job. This is something that they really would rather not have to do. They would love to be able to rely on body scanners and they would love to have operational metal detectors. In some of the facilities, these machines exist, this technology exists, yet the resources aren't there to support the use of them. So you've got a full-body scanner sitting there, ready to be used, but no one hired or trained to actually use it. It sits idle while contraband enters into the facility.

There are provisions within the bill that talk about the ability for COs to inspect mail. I've heard stories where mail is coming in from the outside and it is now laced with fentanyl or carfentanil. We all know now that exposure to that can kill you. If you touch it or inhale it or ingest it, you die. There are limitations now on what COs can do to intercept that suspected contraband through the mail system. That's going to put them at a disadvantage. That's going to jeopardize the safety of the facility and of the people who work there and who are housed there.

There's also the idea where, again, speaking to the ingenuity of the criminal element, there's activity that continues to exist from the inside and the outside where communications between inmates and folks on the outside perpetuate a continuation of criminal activity on the outside. There are cases where you've talked to COs and they've intercepted mail that talked about a plan to do this, to cause a crime, and that was stopped because they suspected. They had the knowledge that that was going on, and they were able to intervene. That's called going above and beyond. These are the stories that you

never hear unless you talk to our COs, our front-line officers in those facilities.

We haven't heard the government talk about the need to support those types of activities. What are the tools that are being given to ensure that they're doing their jobs fully, to the extent of their training and their abilities and their knowledge and experience? They are asking for it. They want to provide a safe and secure environment for themselves, for their colleagues and for the inmates, but it's getting harder and harder. Again, a glaring omission in this bill is those resources that we know are so vital to the execution of those programs and of those actions. I would ask the government, and I'll ask anyone in the ministry or the minister herself: When can we expect to see those? When can we expect to see adequate resources flow through? Because this will all be for naught if we don't see real, tangible action in our communities.

The bill talks about segregation and it talks about the reforms of segregation. We support them with the caveat that that can't be the only thing.

It talks about the establishment of a chief investigator who has prescribed abilities to investigate the use of segregation, to compel reporting, and a whole host of other things that are not contentious and that I think make sense.

It talks about representation from the public, which I think will also go a long way to bringing some layperson involvement into the regional system and to potentially expanding the knowledge base of our communities as to what happens behind those doors and within those walls. I think that's a positive step forward.

It talks about the need for training and a safe work environment, which are two persistent issues for Ontario corrections staff, and the lack of those or a plan to address them. As the nature of criminality evolves and the use of technology and other different hazards that exist and new hazards that exist, the nature of the training to deal with that has to evolve as well. That's a whole other component to the day-to-day operations that this government hasn't spoken about in the bill, but that costs money. It requires a plan, and I haven't, again, heard from this government that they're willing or ready to do that. We would like to see a plan. We would like to see comprehensive support and ongoing training explicitly supported with some dollars, but again, maybe that's to be determined at some point.

1610

Let's circle back: The OPSEU research has provided ministry staff with tables that show—I would imagine they provided every party's staff with tables that show that new CO hires since 2016 were in the 500-person range. It's not clear how many of those are full-time or part-time, but front-line staff suggest that their numbers haven't been bolstered, as most of the new hires are used as backfill for existing staffing complements. In this era of precarious work and an economy that is built up on part-time, precarious work under the tenure of this government, here we are, with the actual government of

the day adding to that metric of the economy by under-resourcing these facilities with part-time workers.

How do you raise a family, how do you dedicate yourself to a professional career in community safety when you know you're going to spend the majority of your career on the part-time call list as a backfill to those that have been hired on full-time—waiting in the list, in the queue, for when you can finally be hired full-time through retirement or attrition? That's not a way to ensure confidence or breed confidence in the facility. It's a way to have folks potentially get in but be constantly wondering about their economic security and looking for other opportunities.

Long gone, I guess, is the era where you could have one solid, secure job with benefits and a retirement plan that you could bank on and provide for your family and contribute to your communities. That's not the system that's being built in our corrections system, and I don't think it breeds good-quality work—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. Point of order.

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, I hate to interrupt this important speech, but I don't believe we have a quorum here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Can I get a count, please?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Essex may continue.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm glad I have the attention of all my colleagues in the House for my riveting, one-hour lead. It is an important debate. I'm honoured to contribute to it, and I hope that I've provided some information that can assist the government and assist my colleagues in trying to come together to identify the priorities that we believe can make the system better.

It's pretty clear here, despite the reforms built into Bill 6, that what it comes down to is political will. It's one of those issues. It comes down to a government that's ready to put their money where their mouth is—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, you heard that right. Get the resources out the door. Support mental health programming in our communities. Support complements in our facilities, complements of COs and probation and parole officers that adequately meet and match the demographic and the volume of cases that they deal with and inmates that they are charged to guard. Any further degradation of this system at this level—as I've said, it's at crisis level. I don't think that can be argued. It's at critical level. If we go backwards, it's going to get worse and the costs are going to escalate: the costs to those who work in the facilities are going to escalate, and the costs to our communities are going to escalate in increased

recidivism, in increased costs through our criminal justice system and increased costs through our penal system. This is the definition of insanity. Continuing to do what you've done and expecting a different result will not yield a fix to this problem.

The overlying theme, I think, of my speech here today is that there is a whole lot more that this government can do, should do and should have done in the past to have alleviated the pressures on the system and to have prevented it from getting here in the first place, which is the biggest shame. That's the thing that I think people need to understand: We didn't have to get here. We didn't have to be here, where you see the drastic numbers of inmate-on-CO violence and inmate-on-inmate violence. We didn't have to get to a point where our facilities are overcrowded to the extent where they start to violate human rights. This is Ontario. This is our province, and that's the state of affairs in our penal system.

I urge this government to—you know, I know they're in bargaining. I'll tell you an old adage, as a 40-year-old labour activist.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You're just a kid, buddy.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, a 40-year-old labour activist with probably 35 years of labour activism under my belt.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Hi, Bo.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, hi, Mom and Dad.

Here's the adage: Cheap work isn't skilled and skilled work isn't cheap. That applies to a whole host of different professions, whether you're building cabinets or you're laying tile or you're front-line health care workers or you're casino workers who are on strike in Windsor—I want to give them a shout-out right now; they are fighting for fairness and respect at the bargaining table under a monolith that makes a massive amount of wealth. That needs to be shared and spread around in our communities so that those workers who do a great job, who meet the highest threshold, are compensated adequately.

It definitely goes for those in our corrections system, in our probation and parole system. It means compensating them well. It means validating and respecting the job that they do. It means adding the resources so that they can do it well. That means more COs, more probation and parole officers, and adequate supports in terms of programming that we know will make the job safer, will make it more effective and will save us money in the long run. I understand that. New Democrats understand that. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, understands that. Our communities understand that. We're ready, willing and able to provide the support that our communities are demanding and deserve, because it's the right thing to do and the evidence is clear as well.

This isn't something that we're making up on the fly, listening to the backroom bureaucrats that are saying, "Here, you can pinch a penny here and save a dollar there, and things will be status quo." That hasn't happened. Things have gotten worse through that type of austerity agenda. We can't afford to do it. Our communities will be ill-served if that continues under this Liberal

government. It's something that needs to be changed immediately.

I hope that through the discussion around this bill, members of the government acknowledge that as well. We can talk about the merits of the bill, and I've already said that New Democrats support the thrust of the bill, the intention of the bill and the prescribed regulations and legislative initiatives in the bill. We support that, but the big issue is the price tag that this government hasn't identified that it's willing to pay and invest in making sure that this works. It will all be for naught if that isn't in tandem with legislation that identifies the requirements of our facilities and the needs of our front-line workers.

1620

Speaker, I want to thank you. I want to thank the members of this House, my colleagues, for their attention. I definitely want to thank the corrections and community safety and probation and parole officers who are out there working right now keeping our communities safe. We appreciate the work that you do, and our commitment is to make sure that you come home—everyone comes home—at the end of the night.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank my colleague from Essex for leading this afternoon's debate on Bill 6. I think the comments he made with regard to this proposed bill, if passed, will significantly improve how we manage and deal with this very important file dealing with a very vulnerable population in our community. The member indicated his concern in his comments about a safe and secure environment. I totally agree with his comments about making sure every correctional officer who goes to work comes back home.

The other piece here, Mr. Speaker, is that he also mentioned earlier the limited resources as it relates to rehabilitation and reintegration, and that is a critical component of this proposed legislation. If passed, the proposed legislation will ensure more resources as it relates to the issue of mental health, because at the end of the day, we know that many inmates in our custody have social, medical and behavioural issues, and they do need additional support, particularly in the area of mental health.

I recently visited the Toronto East Detention Centre as well as North Bay. In my 20-minute remarks later this afternoon, I will address those issues.

So I want to acknowledge the comments made by my colleague from Essex, but I also want to encourage him to know that the government is going to be putting additional resources to improve the capital resources when it comes to the space issue. I know that we've committed to rebuild two particular facilities. I know that by improving these facilities, it will provide more opportunity for programming supporting the issue about reintegration and, more importantly, the rehabilitation of these inmates, making sure that when they return to the community, they will have the support they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the speech on Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018.

Mr. Speaker, the member talked in his hour-long lead-off about some of the older facilities versus the newer facilities and there being a big difference. I certainly would agree with him on that. I had the opportunity a couple of years ago to tour the Thunder Bay facility and, frankly, I was shocked at the conditions there, the overcrowding. It looks like something that should have been closed a few hundred years ago. I'd say that facility is an embarrassment in the province of Ontario.

The member also talked about other issues. I've recently met with people who work at the Central North facility, and they were talking about the crisis in corrections and the challenges that they have with some of the new rules with regard to segregation. I think they said they had 42 separate segregation cells, but most of them were being used by people with mental health issues, so they didn't have any space or tools to deal with problems on the actual floor. There used to be a tool that if they did have problems in the prison, they could use segregation as a tool, but now most of them are filled with people with mental health issues who shouldn't really be in them.

The member also talked about contraband getting into some of the facilities and the need for the screening equipment. I know there is some of the equipment being put in place; however, the guards I met with said they don't get adequate training to be able to use that equipment properly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to follow my good friend from Essex, my young learned friend, who spoke for an hour without notes this afternoon and revealed to us the crisis in corrections.

It doesn't matter what we talk about in this House these days; there's a crisis in every debate, be it in corrections, long-term care, health care, hallway medicine, affordable housing, poverty, mental issues, dental health, winter road maintenance, education—you name it. This government that has been there for 15 years has put their programs in crisis mode for lack of resources.

Lack of resources in corrections has been pointed out. The problem with the violence in our correctional system because of a lack of resources, a lack of people to control the inmates and to protect themselves and to protect inmates from themselves: We hear about it every day, and my friend brought it up again. Adam Capay, up in Thunder Bay, in solitary confinement for four years—not one, not two, not three, but four years in a hellhole up there. The mayor calls it—I can't use the word, how he describes his jail up there. I'll say "stinkhole." He uses a four-letter word; I'll say "stinkhole." It's how the mayor of Thunder Bay describes the correctional facility in his municipality that should have been shut down 50 years ago, 75 years ago, whatever, and we're still talking about it today.

My good friend from Essex has reminded us that we have to find the money. We have to put more money into corrections. We have to have a better system. We talk about how we're all so proud of our education system, of our safe roads. Nobody is disputing that up to a point, but when it comes time to put money into a program, now is the time to put money into corrections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? I believe there's still one more. The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. It's always good to get up to speak to the bill. I know sometimes we think the Liberal government has run out of things to say.

It is in crisis mode, as the member from the third party was talking to, and this is just a classic example. I had a chance to visit the corrections facility in Orléans; it doesn't look a lot ahead of the Cornwall jail, which was built just a couple of decades before Confederation—the state it is in places. That one, of course, was closed because of age, but this one remains. People in showers—there just is not enough room. All the problems that have gone around—there has been study after study. They're only matched by promise after promise to fix the situation. Here we have, months before an election, still no money spent, but the proposed legislation is being rushed in to save the day. It's going to take more than that. It's going to take facilities and a plan. We don't see a plan from this government; we just see more money thrown at things.

It's time to actually sit back in this province and look at where we need to go and what our direction is going to be that will actually take us out of this—I won't say recession, but the downturn we've experienced in this province over the last 15 years. When you look at growth compared to other provinces and other places, we're stagnating. They brag about recovering back most of what we lost in 2008, but you look at where we're standing compared to where we were in 2003 and there's nothing to brag about. I saw something where median family income is up 3.7% in Ontario since the recession. I know maybe it's not fair to compare it to some of the other provinces, but the large economic engine of Saskatchewan is up 37%. Matching our public services—anyway, I will get a chance, hopefully, to talk later.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Essex can now reply.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to thank my colleagues from Scarborough–Agincourt, Parry Sound–Muskoka and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and my friend the illustrious member from Windsor–Tecumseh, who talked about the simple fact that these facilities, under this Liberal government's tenure, have been under-resourced, thereby putting them into crisis designation.

1630

Everything is at crisis designation here in this province: our health care system, our education system, our long-term-care system. What does that tell you about this government? It tells you that they failed. They haven't

done the job right. Despite all the press releases, all the announcements, the ribbons cut and the positive media attention that they are able to garner day after day—despite all of that—the people on the ground in our communities who are actually living with the ramifications of this government are telling them that things are not well, that they need support. They need help, and it needs to be fixed.

Will Bill 6, the Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018, fix the problem in corrections? No, it will not. It will start a conversation. It will give some tools to give some parameters around some aspects, but we're dealing with a complex system that has overarching intersections with mental health supports, our health care system, our education system and socio-economic determinants of health. All of that comes into play when you end up talking about our corrections system, because failures at all those levels lead people into corrections. It's time that we resource it so that we can get people out and make it a safer place to work for those who work inside.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 6, the Correctional Services Transformation Act. Before I begin my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize a couple of the staff who I visited recently at the Toronto East Detention Centre. I want to thank them for showing me around the Toronto East Detention Centre, which is located in Scarborough, but more importantly for their work every day.

I want to name first my classmate from elementary school, Wendy McGuire—I'm not sure if you're watching. She is working as a correctional officer in the Toronto East Detention Centre. It was great to see you again. We went to school together, and it was great to see her at Toronto East Detention Centre as a correctional officer.

There was Lorne Mansley, who is the deputy superintendent of services; Jennifer Rogers, the deputy superintendent of programs; Sheleza Latif, the health care manager; Jamie Perkins, the staff sergeant who gave me the tour; security manager John Lawson; and the deputy superintendent of administration, Winston Wong. Thank you to the folks at the Toronto East Detention Centre. I know you do great work every day to keep our community safe.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to take these 18 minutes to have a few remarks about Bill 6. This particular legislation, if passed, would become the foundation of the largest transformation for decades in terms of this whole issue of transformation.

I know the opposition had a moment earlier to talk about why it's taking so long to have the government reform the correctional services. It was just recently that Howard Sapers, Ontario's Independent Advisor on Corrections Reform, submitted his report to the government. I want to share a quote from Mr. Sapers in terms of his remarks supporting the government's proposed legislation:

"The legislation introduced today reaffirms Ontario's commitment to evidence-based practice and fundamental principles in correctional services. The government is moving forward with necessary changes, and this is a foundation that will see Ontario become a leader in humane, evidence-based and rights-respecting correctional practices."

It is very easy for the opposition to criticize the government in terms of correctional reform, but I'm going to turn to the members opposite. This has not been reformed for over 20 years. Let's call it the way it is, okay, my friends?

It's also very important that with regard to any type of reform of this magnitude, we need to make sure that it's evidence-based. We also need to consult the respective partners. It's also very easy for the opposition when you also had the chance to do it. When we consult, we also talk to the front-line people.

There are a number of areas, if the legislation is passed, where we will modernize correctional services. First, it will see setting the rules when it comes to defining segregation. Mr. Sapers has provided guidelines for us in terms of aligning the segregation piece with international standards, eliminating its use for vulnerable individuals. At the end of the day, we know inmates in corrections are already recognized as vulnerable, but those who are in segregation have a greater incidence of vulnerability.

Improving the conditions when it comes to confinement—in terms of minimum living standards that will be applied to all adult inmates, bringing consistency across the board.

Increasing transparency and accountability, meaning that we will be establishing the independent inspector general to ensure compliance with the legislation or policy, as well as clearly defining legislation when it comes to health care: As a former nurse, I'm going to be speaking a little bit more about the whole issue of health transformation when it comes to correctional services in a minute.

Also, the comments made by my colleague from Essex—he is correct when he talks about the issue of reforming, rehabilitation and reintegration. We know that these particular inmates will be coming out into the community. We want to make sure they're properly rehabilitated and supported in a correctional facility while they're there.

Another piece of the legislation: When we are changing this legislation, we are also going to make sure the system will be rebuilt based on dignity, human rights and accountability.

We also want to ensure that there will be more resources for front-line staff, particularly in the area of mental health support, with mental health nurses to support the inmates but also supporting front-line correctional officers.

Improving infrastructure: I know there were comments made earlier about the fact that we haven't put in enough resources. When we're dealing with infrastructure,

infrastructure takes time. It's not just in the correctional facilities; we also do infrastructure province-wide. Whether it's in hospitals, whether it's in universities, whether it's community colleges or in our local schools, we're building the entire system across the province, improving infrastructure. We have made commitments on two new correctional facilities in Ottawa as well as North Bay. So modernization of infrastructure will take time.

I want to spend some time on the issue of segregation. Mr. Sapers's report, encouraging and asking the government and providing guidelines about dealing with segregation—that there is overutilization of segregation, especially when it comes to vulnerable inmates, who may have mental health concerns, a developmental disability or a number of areas, like pregnant inmates.

The proposed legislation also addresses the issue of supports and services to address this population of segregated inmates. We want to make sure that when we make this transformation, we are:

- aligning these changes to international standards to define what segregation is: not just a specific physical area but rather the physical and social isolation of individuals for 22 hours or more a day. These are known as Mandela rules;

- prohibiting segregation of the most vulnerable inmates;

- phasing in time restrictions prohibiting the use of segregation beyond 15 consecutive days; and

- establishing independent decision-making panels to review segregation decisions.

These are very important pieces of reform. I know that there's always more room for improvement.

The area with regard to inmates being in segregation: We need to make sure that those inmates who are in segregation are being visited daily by the superintendent and members of the health care team, because at the end of the day, we are doing no service to these vulnerable inmates when they're not being supported while they're in segregation. They also need to be reviewed by the health care team at least once every five days. These are new requirements, Mr. Speaker, if the legislation is passed.

Also, at the same time, we want to make sure our front-line staff and managers know about these reforms in terms of properly implementing this legislation.

The other piece of the legislation you heard me speaking about earlier, Mr. Speaker, was dealing with the whole issue of oversight and accountability. This new legislation will be the largest transformation in Ontario when it comes to correctional services. The newly created position called the inspector general would have oversight in terms of correctional staff and ministry, fully complying with the proposed legislation and all the other policy. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is the right thing to do. There will be a body that will be responsible for oversight and accountability.

1640

We also heard that there will be an independent review panel, to review and make decisions on cases

where inmates are held in non-disciplinary segregation to help with this regard. This particular panel will ensure that the clients are held in the least restrictive conditions possible, reaching the five or 10 consecutive days in segregation, or 30 and 55 aggregate days. There is a review process by the panel.

Correctional staff will have an opportunity to deal with the concerns—I know the member from Essex mentioned earlier that OPSEU was visiting Queen's Park recently; I certainly met with them. They have expressed concerns about safety. We heard them, and it is very important that every correctional officer going to work gets to return home. We are also very concerned about the fact that the correctional service staff have an opportunity to talk and share about their working conditions, and the fact that every employee in the correctional system is safe at all times.

The other piece with regard to the proposed legislation: If passed, it will provide a variety of health services initiatives. As a former registered nurse, this particular reform interests me a great deal, particularly in the area of concerns in dealing with the initial assessment of the inmates. Just like when we're dealing with new patients coming into long-term-care facilities, inmates will be assessed when they are coming in for new admission, which is the right thing to do. You'll have a baseline of information about the inmates, whether it's their health care needs or psychosocial needs. This is the right thing to do.

The other piece is that we want to make sure that health services are comprehensive and timely and that the right care is being provided to these inmates. Some of the areas that they will be reforming deal with the treatment of disease or injury, health promotion, disease prevention and dental care. I want to do a shout-out to the dentist who was working at the Toronto East Detention Centre when I was visiting the facility recently. He was offering me some dental services, but I certainly appreciate his great work at the Toronto East Detention Centre.

Vision care, the mental health and addictions piece, traditional indigenous healing and medicines: This is the piece that is extremely lacking. Those inmates with cultural and diversity needs have not been addressed for many, many years.

I'm very, very pleased that when the Howard Sapers report was submitted to the minister herself, in his first report, he asked us to change the oversight when it comes to health care services in our correctional system, and to make sure that inmates who are currently in our correctional system have the same type of health care that we are proud of outside in the community. This is a very, very important step in terms of making sure that the vulnerable inmates who are currently in our facilities have the same type of health care as those Ontarians who are currently living in the community. I believe that when we transform the correctional act with Bill 6, when we pass it, it will provide that opportunity.

The other piece here, Mr. Speaker: You heard me speaking about the indigenous and racialized populations.

It is disheartening for me as a member of provincial Parliament here to see that certain ethnicities and certain indigenous populations have a higher incidence in our correctional facilities. With the proposed bill, if passed, we would transform this. We would make sure of the necessary supports for racialized and indigenous people in our correctional facilities. I believe that all members of this House would want to make sure those inmates will get the proper support that they need.

We want to create a system where there will be cultural competency to increase the support for those inmates. But more importantly, we want to make sure that two of the initiatives being addressed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for indigenous inmates—we are going to make sure they are properly supported and that their needs are being heard. The government is committed, in terms of oversight bodies, to enhancing the training on indigenous rights and culture.

The other piece here, Mr. Speaker, is that we are very, very proud to say that the proposed legislation, if passed, would ensure cultural competency across the entire system to deliver similar training to promote recognition of and respect for Ontario's diverse communities even in correctional facilities, because those inmates are all Ontario people. They deserve the same type of cultural respect and services, whether it is for spiritual needs or cultural languages support, but also, more importantly, rehabilitative programming, because we know our correctional facilities are very diverse.

When I visited the Toronto East Detention Centre, when I was visiting in North Bay, and previously, before the Don jail was closed—when I visited those facilities, I could see that the population is aging and the population is very diverse. We need to make sure that programming reflects the cultural and indigenous communities. We also need to make sure that rehabilitation programs support those needs, in terms of the inmates, because we know that certain populations are over-represented in the correctional facilities. We need to address this piece.

Earlier, the member from Essex mentioned mental health supports—and I want to thank him for his comments—when it comes to the diverse communities. We know we need to do better.

I am also very pleased that the proposed legislation, if passed, will create what they call community advisory boards. If passed, we are proposing to expand the community advisory board model to establish these boards for each of the institutions. It's not based on geography. In each facility, they will have a community advisory board. It will strengthen the links between the correctional facilities and the communities that will be receiving these inmates when they leave the correctional facilities. The board members will act as independent observers, offering a balanced perspective in terms of care, in terms of supervision, in terms of programming for inmates—especially those inmates with diverse backgrounds or from indigenous communities—and will provide advice to the minister in terms of operations. These community

advisory boards will provide the community lens that sometimes is missing. Oftentimes, the various overpopulated, diverse communities don't have a voice. These proposed community advisory boards will provide an opportunity for diverse communities to have a say, but also provide input for those inmates who may be voiceless, because at the end of the day we need to make sure they have a voice in our correctional system.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to share with you some positive support of Bill 6. The Ontario Ombudsman, Paul Dubé, has spoken about supporting the proposed legislation: "I am pleased to see Ontario moving to address the unacceptable practices and conditions in the correctional system that my office and others have identified in recent years. This legislation is responsive and ambitious. It has the potential to create a more humane, accountable and transparent correctional system."

Mr. Dubé, I want to say thank you for your review of Bill 6. I look forward to seeing you when we discharge this bill to committee and hearing your comments on how to further improve the legislation in terms of the review and the public consultation.

Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Renu Mandhane has also shared her comments about the proposed legislation, Bill 6: "The Correctional Services Transformation Act is a major step forward in addressing serious human rights issues in Ontario's correctional system. These reforms have the potential to positively impact some of the most vulnerable people in our society."

So, Mr. Speaker, three very important, independent officers of our correctional system have shared their comments about Bill 6.

I know the opposition will be saying to us that more needs to be done. I agree with them: More needs to be done, because these are very vulnerable members of our society.

I recently met the Governor of Connecticut. The Governor of Connecticut has been leading the way when it comes to correctional reform. His position is that those who are the most marginalized and the most vulnerable, like those inmates—he has been championing correctional reforms nationally in the United States, and he has been leading the way.

1650

Some of the stuff he shared with me at a recent conference: "If we do nothing in supporting our correctional reforms, we have done nothing in terms of making sure this population has been heard and making sure they're properly supported when it comes to rehabilitation and reintegration into society." This is a very important piece.

In the last piece in my short time, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the members opposite that the transformation of this bill, if passed, will address a number of fronts that they talked about: infrastructure, rehabilitation and reintegration.

I know they will recognize the fact of mental health reform, because the mental health reforms in Bill 6 paral-

lel some of the stuff we're dealing with in the proposed legislation about the budget. The budget talks about significant transformation when it comes to mental health. We are infusing, in the 2018 budget, mental health reform across the board. So I would say to the members opposite that if we do nothing as a system, then mental health, whether it is in correctional facilities, whether it is in our schools, whether it is in our long-term care, whether it's in post-secondary—we need to do better across the board when it comes to mental health.

Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to this conversation today, and also to taking this particular bill to our committee and having further conversations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a privilege to rise. It's interesting that we talked earlier about the desperation of this government, and this legislation is no different.

I think the member talked about trying to lay blame across all parties here, but in 2013—I guess it's a big date here, because the ministry settled a human rights complaint about their segregation. That was 10 years after they took over. You might give them some leniency on that, but we're five years after that and we're still dealing with legislation that hasn't been passed to fix that issue. It's so bad that the government didn't know how long some of their inmates were being placed in segregation—and that after all kinds of indications that they had a problem.

This government has lots of time for unimportant things—we look at the Green Energy Act—and things that they put immediate attention to and what it has cost us. But things that are glaring, and human rights complaints—zero to no action.

This problem has not been a secret. I first toured our facility in Orléans back in 2011, 2012, and it was a problem back then—and nothing. Last year, all over CFRA, the local radio station in Ottawa, they were talking about the weekend, and housing inmates in showers, which had been going on for some time. And yet they sit back here for another year, and they're rushing something in as if it's timely legislation.

This is just like a lot of this new fairness campaign we're seeing, but it's anything but fair and it's certainly late and it's certainly an issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon to you. It's a pleasure to follow my friend from Scarborough–Agincourt on this issue. I commend her for taking the time to go visit her local correctional facility, and bumping into old friends from grade school.

I toured the new facility, the southwest facility, in Windsor, in fact, with the member from Windsor West, Ms. Gretszy, before it opened up. I have just a little bit of insight into what goes on in corrections.

I think we can trace a lot of it back to mental health. As the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care,

Mr. Hoskins, used to say, or started saying a few months ago, "There is no health without mental health." Mental health is the core issue of what we're talking about today, because we have a problem with underfunding mental health for so long that it has gone out into our community in such a way that the police are inundated with the number of Mental Health Act cases they have to intervene with. Then they take these people into a hospital setting where they don't really belong, because they should be in a facility that deals with mental health issues, and then eventually, at the long end of the day, they end up in our correctional facilities, as opposed to a facility working with people with mental health issues.

The bottom line is that for 15 years the Liberal government has not funded mental health, has not funded corrections, and has not done enough to look after the ills of society in such a way as to get to the core of the problem, as opposed to saying, "We've got a problem but we don't know how to deal with it." So, after 15 years, it has come to this: yet another crisis, this one in corrections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It also gives me pleasure to rise today to speak to this bill, Bill 6, the correctional services act.

Coming from a riding like Kingston and the Islands, which, as everybody in this House probably knows, has numerous federal correctional facilities, I am very familiar, having worked in the federal side of politics before being elected as a member here in this Legislature. So I do understand something about the challenges that our correctional officers go through on a daily basis.

I know that the changes are going to take something to implement, and I need to say that we are dedicated to working together with our correctional officers to implement those changes.

We know that there has also been an overuse of segregation, particularly for inmates who have significant mental illnesses or developmental disabilities, those who are pregnant, and those who have been afflicted with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, another area that I have been working quite a bit in.

I also visited a local provincial correctional facility, the Quinte correctional facility, shortly after I was elected, just because I have that relationship already with the federal facility. I want to acknowledge the members there that I met with, including the last visit that I had there with the RNAO members who are working full-time there. We know, and they know, that it's important to work with our correctional officers, and prohibiting the segregation of our most vulnerable inmates is an extremely important priority for us. We are aligning with the international standards to define segregation in a specific area.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to stand and speak to this. We support the idea of repairing the system, because we are hearing over and over there are lot of challenges.

Interestingly, Adam Capay's case reflects the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' inadequate tracking and review of segregation placements. When the chief commissioner asked for information about the duration of segregation placements, Adam's—more than 1,500 days and now the longest known placement—wasn't provided because the ministry didn't know about it. That's unacceptable.

Too much of the reform in this bill is actually left up to future regulations. If you think back to what I was just speaking about, Bill 3, the Pay Transparency Act, I brought up the exact same thing. The government is bringing out bills and they hadn't even, in that case, defined the terms and conditions. In this case, again, they're leaving it up to future regulations.

The whole intent of legislation is to be unambiguous, to be clear and concise, and to be brought before the legislators to actually create that law. In this case, it fails to define many of its provisions, such as the independent review panel, the meaning of "serious misconduct," new minimum living conditions, new security classifications for inmates, and the new internal complaints process. Mr. Speaker, would those not seem to be pretty fundamental things that you might want to define if you're changing legislation today so that people know exactly what they're expected to do, and what you can expect as an inmate?

At the end of the day, 10 years to implement the provisions of this bill is simply ridiculous. It proves that this government has no idea what it's doing.

Safety is very much a concern that has been brought out by many of the correctional officers. That has to be paramount for the staff and, obviously, the inmates. We're concerned, again, if this is really being addressed in this.

1700

Senior bureaucrats at the Ministry of Correctional Services had been alerted more than 50 times about Adam Capay's segregation. The minister at the time actually visited Capay's cell. If 50 reports and a personal visit from the minister didn't motivate this government to do something about Adam Capay, how will more bureaucracy and 16 reports help?

Mr. Speaker, we want to improve, but we want to make sure that we do it through the Legislature and with good, solid feedback.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Scarborough—Agincourt can now respond.

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank the members from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Windsor—Tecumseh, Kingston and the Islands, and Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for their remarks.

I heard consistently that there have been concerns raised about segregation and making sure our correctional officers are safe when they go to work and return to work. There's also acknowledgement that this legislation needs to get better and improved. This is exactly what we're trying to do. There's a perception that this is a last-

minute type of legislation when, in reality, that's not true. Mr. Sapers has just recently submitted his two reports to the minister herself, providing the guidance for the minister to table Bill 6, the Correctional Services Transformation Act.

At the end of the day, it does take time when you have these kinds of professional, comprehensive reviews and providing direction specifically, as we heard today, about the issue of segregation. When we improve segregation, it has to be best practices, it has to be evidence-based, and now we're looking at doing international standards across the board.

I think that members opposite will all agree with me that the issue of mental health has to be addressed across the board, including those who are in correctional facilities. The inmates themselves, as well as the correctional officers, need to be supported—supported in terms of proper training and also the resources to support those inmates who currently have mental health problems. But it's not just mental health; most of them also may have addictions, because it's mental health and addictions combined.

We also need to make sure they have rehabilitation support and reintegration when they leave correctional facilities. That's a really complex system. It's not easy to repair and it takes time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 6 today. But I'm hoping I can indulge your time and take a few moments. We know that the Legislature will be winding up soon and we will be into a general election. There's only probably a few more weeks left to be here. I don't know how often I'll have the opportunity to speak to some of the members opposite who have decided not to seek re-election and won't be continuing on in the House.

I believe there's a substantial number of members—20% of the Liberal caucus have chosen not to seek re-election. I should point out that the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is here today. I did just want to say that there are going to be a number of people who will not be seeking re-election. I would say that's a choice that they've made. I wish them well in their future endeavours.

But it reminds me that I often take the train. I've had the occasion, when taking the train, to speak sometimes with the former Speaker of the House, Gilles Morin. Gilles Morin was a Liberal member. He's a fine, fine gentleman. I enjoyed our conversations on the train.

The first time that I met Gilles Morin, we engaged in this discussion, and he said, "You know, when I left politics, I left with the full majority support of my constituents." Now, of course, the members opposite who are leaving now and not seeking re-election will not be able to leave politics with the full support, as Mr. Morin

so aptly put it. That's what happens in an election when you lose. The majority of constituents have expressed their support for them to leave. But the 11 who aren't seeking re-election—that opportunity remains for the remaining 40 or so Liberal members. I just wanted to put those kind words out for the members opposite.

Speaker, Bill 6 is an important bill. It is apparently to address the crisis and tragedy that is happening in corrections in this province. Unfortunately, it is another defective Liberal bill.

Before I start talking to the bill itself: On Facebook yesterday, there was a posting from a lawyer in Ottawa. His name was Russ Molot. He represents the family of a man who hung himself at the notorious Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. The inquest started today, Speaker. This is what Russ Molot posted on Facebook:

"Two years ago a young man named Yousef Hussein decided to hang himself at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. He had been waiting for a trial of some pretty serious charges for two years before that. Tomorrow morning is the start of a week-long coroner's inquest to determine how his death might have been prevented. I act for his family and will be attending and presenting at the inquest.

"Preparation for this has opened my eyes to a system that is underfunded, undermanned and totally ill-equipped to deal with people who have mental health issues.

"As I am going through the documentation, I can't help but wonder how many nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health beds and hospitals could have been provided to Ontarians with the money blown by this incompetent government on eHealth, Ornge, gas plants, cover-ups, green energy, useless windmills, hydro screw-ups and overall mismanagement. They are literally costing people's lives with their" mismanagement of these programs.

Speaker, that's something that the minister of public safety and corrections should read, from the lawyer representing the family of Yousef Hussein, who hung himself at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. We can see that Bill 6 does nothing to address the concerns that Russ Molot has identified in his Facebook posting the day before he goes to a coroner's inquest. That should resonate with the members opposite, Speaker: Today, as we're debating Bill 6, a coroner's inquest has once again started into the failings of this government in public safety and corrections.

Speaker, I've had the opportunity to visit detention centres in the province. I'll speak to that a little bit later on. Bill 6 fails—and not just Bill 6; this government has failed repeatedly, consistently and for 15 years—to recognize what the fault is with our corrections. They still don't recognize what the fault is, or they don't have the courage to stand up and address the fault in our corrections.

There is story after story after story that has littered the media in this province for years over the overcrowding at our detention centres. The bulk of it, the bulk of

our inmates, are people who have not been convicted of a crime. They are there awaiting trial to determine innocence or guilt.

1710

In 2005, 50% of our inmates were there on remand, were there awaiting trial. That number has increased to over 65%. Over two thirds of every individual in our detention centres are not and have not been convicted of any crime. That, Speaker, is a crime. That is a crime.

When over two thirds of the people are in our detention centres waiting for a date for their case to be heard in court—and I take it back to that statement from Russ Molot that I read earlier about young Yousef Hussein, who hung himself after waiting for two years to go to trial. That's the failing in our corrections system, and Bill 6 does absolutely nothing to address that fundamental fault. I listened to the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. Nothing in her presentation today spoke about the two thirds of our inmates who have not been convicted but sit there languishing, waiting and waiting for a court date.

Speaker, this government will never fix any of the crises that they've made in this province. They will not fix our hallway health care, they will not fix our long-term care, they will not fix our corrections, because they don't see or understand what the problem is. To them, this Legislature and legislation is all about PR and optics and never about actually fixing anything. And the problem continues, and continues until June 7.

I know the member from GPR is laughing as I speak about this, but laugh to the family of Yousef Hussein whose inquest started today. You can laugh all you like. I don't think Yousef Hussein's family is laughing when they sit in a coroner's inquest trying to determine what went wrong with their son who hung himself while at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre.

Speaker, corrections in crisis is no laughing matter. It is nothing to be brushed off and dismissed. It has serious consequences that this government is refusing to recognize; serious consequences that this government thinks are best treated through a PR exercise, a piece of legislation that amends 16 other acts, but doesn't do anything, doesn't do a single thing about this growing population of people who are not convicted of any crime, but languish in our jails, waiting and waiting.

Those are the statistics from 2005 shortly after this government took power: 50%, now two thirds and growing and growing. Is Bill 6 going to do anything to expedite those people to get to trial? Is it going to do anything at all? Absolutely not.

There's been a lot of talk about segregation. This is a complicated subject when we talk about segregation. It is not a black and white issue. When I went to the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre and was on a tour with the superintendent of the facility, the first max unit we went to—as we were walking down that hallway to the max unit, the guards were bringing out two people: one covered in blood and severely beaten—they were taking that individual to a separate room to give some immedi-

ate first aid attention to—and a very, very large other individual. It was clear there had just been a significant physical altercation. One of them took a very severe beating.

There is segregation for people who are violent towards other inmates. In order to protect the other inmates from that violence, they need to be removed in some manner. There are people like the individual who had been severely beaten. You could see; you could just look. This individual was not a big, strong, physically overpowering individual—quite different. He was a little bit older, a little bit more slight—very slight. He would not have had the physical capacity to defend himself in that altercation. He needed protection as well, but there were others that needed protection. I went and visited the infirmary and the mental health segment. There were people there that could not be put into the general population, or else, undoubtedly, they would have ended up like that other individual.

This is a complicated matter. It's something that requires thoughtful discourse and significant understanding of the multiple layers that make up this problem. How do we do it? I can tell you, Speaker, that we don't fix that problem through a PR exercise called Bill 6. That is not the way to address it. How are we going to provide a level of protection—I've just spoken about the inmates, but there's protection for the staff as well. We have to understand that our detention centres have some people in there that are deserving to be in there. They are violent. They are criminals.

We need to put away the PR exercise, which this Liberal government is so famous for and so prolific at introducing, and we need to begin to recognize that thoughtful, intelligent discourse based on knowledge is needed and that this Legislature has a role in bringing that debate forward.

One of the other things that was a significant problem that is not addressed here is the intermittent sentences in our detention centres. There is no discussion about that, but you talk to any of the guards, any of the staff, any of the correctional people, and they intuitively will tell you this: that the way we're doing our intermittent sentencings is a problem. They actually attenuate and amplify the problem in corrections. Here we have people who come in just on the weekends, and they do it over multiple weekends. The people in those detention centres get to know who they are. They get to place significant demands on those people.

1720

The stories are legendary: the placement of Kinder Surprise eggs in body orifices to bring in contraband; or they will be punished and brutally assaulted if they don't do what those others in the detention centres want them to do, if they don't bring in the tobacco or don't bring in the drugs.

We still don't have body scanners in our detention centres. We have a couple. That has been a long-standing flaw. How many body scanners are going to be installed now, with Bill 6? Squat.

What is this government doing about intermittent sentences: bringing in intermittent sentencing on inmates, and then putting them into the same overcrowded sections of detention centres where there are violent criminals? There's no discussion about that.

Speaker, I find that it's more than disappointing; it's heartbreaking that this government is so dismissive and so cavalier and uncaring about the inmates, about those who are awaiting trial, about the staff who put up with this. I can tell you, I know the staff well. Jeff Burke: I live in his family's home, his childhood home. He lives around the corner from me. He speaks to me about his work at the OCDC. It is brutal, it is terrible, and this government fails, and continues to fail, to address the problems. They think everything is okay if they just come up with another piece of BS PR in Bill 6—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Withdraw that.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

But, really, Speaker, what should be withdrawn is this government. This government needs to be withdrawn. They have a lack of compassion, a lack of interest and a lack of caring.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington certainly is passionate about this issue and this situation, from his tours of the facilities, and it sounds like he has done his homework.

My personal exposure to this is, we have a large jail in Hamilton. I toured it, and what I found amazing was the fact that they had a lot of common rooms overcrowded with many inmates with different types of situations and different types of violations. There were some older prisoners in there who would be vulnerable to some of the younger ones; who may have had drug issues or they have problems—they're violent—and they didn't get a lot of protection. By the time the guards get to them to break up a fight, some of these elderly inmates could be seriously injured or killed. I wasn't happy with that situation.

The access to drugs has been an ongoing issue for decades. I think that in this modern age, with the types of surveillance equipment we have available, they should be able to stop the influx of drugs. If it's getting through—if there are any members, unfortunately, of the staff who are assisting in that, it should be dealt with. They can't allow these types of things to get in there, because we've had a lot of overdoses in the Hamilton jail, and a lot of OxyContin and all these things that are killing people. We have had a lot of people rushed to the general hospital in the last few weeks out of that jail. It's serious stuff. I don't understand, myself, how this stuff gets in. Certainly, X-ray machines would be a big addition to the jail. I think we've got one there. I think more would be in order. It's a pretty large facility.

Segregation: That's another thing that has to be looked at. These are sometimes mental health issues that are not

dealt with. They just put them in there, and they think it's going to be cured. It isn't; they need help.

So there are a lot of things we have to do, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise to comment on the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington's comments. I also want to recognize the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and his comments about the whole issue of contraband and the safety at the correctional facility, because safety is not just about the inmates but also the workers at correctional facilities, the nurses, the doctors, the dentists—a variety of people.

I listened attentively to the member who spoke earlier in his leadoff for 20 minutes. Of course, we need to do better and we need to do more when it comes to this very vulnerable population. I was very pleased to hear what he said earlier about the whole issue of mental health because, at the end of the day, there are significant concerns about the inmates who are violent. We need to make sure that they are properly supported, that they are not harming themselves, but also the staff who work in the correctional facility.

The other piece here—the member opposite made some criticisms about the government and why it's so little, so late, in terms of this particular bill. I want to remind the member opposite that it was just May 4, 2017, when Mr. Sapers submitted his first report, focusing on segregation. That's just last May, in 2017. Again, Mr. Sapers wrote another report, and on October 3, 2017, released his second report, focusing on correctional practices. Based on these two reports, we now have this proposed bill, Bill 6, the correctional transformation act.

I note also that on December 2, 2016, the Ombudsman did his own investigation in the area of data tracking and placement review in terms of inmate confinements in a facility.

So it is a concern. We're going to have to do better in this particular legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's always great to hear our member and colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Addington—there's some more to that. His debate is always insightful.

We see a record from this government. If you can imagine, 65%—two thirds—of the inmates are awaiting trial, and it's getting worse. This is not a government that shows that they have things under control. We do not see a government here that even appears to be caring. They seem to be more triggered by bad-news stories, and you know, of course, we know there's no shortage of these bad-news stories.

As I said previously, I had the opportunity to tour the Orléans correctional facility, actually a couple of times. It's time that we look at a strategy, a plan of where we're going. The answer does not seem just to be to replace this facility with another one the same size.

I hear that in my area we're sending two OPP officers every day to go on an hour-and-a-half drive or an hour to

Orléans to pick up a prisoner, come back, sit in court, where maybe they'll be seen and maybe they won't, and then they have the two-hour or hour-and-a-half drive back. It's just a sign of poor planning.

Our court system is certainly overtaxed, and we need an answer. It's not something that we can pull out of the air. There has been study after study. Of course, every time there is a bad-news story, it's time for another study. But it's time now to take some action and put a plan in place and fix the problem, because we're seeing a problem that, month after month, is only getting worse; it's not getting better. Any government that's worth their weight in salt needs to address the problem and fix it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in the House on behalf of the good people of Timiskaming-Cochrane, and today to respond to the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and his comments regarding Bill 6. I believe it's the Correctional Services Transformation Act. Those are big words.

My only personal experience with the correctional services is when I toured the North Bay Jail and the Monteith correctional centre, which is in my riding. Those two tours were probably the most intense experiences that I have had since I've had the opportunity to have this job, because until you are in a facility where people who don't want to be there are behind bars, you can't fully fathom how big a pressure cooker that is. It's the ultimate pressure cooker.

1730

The member brought forward several times that—and those figures were explained to me as well—two thirds of the inmates are still awaiting trial. They haven't been convicted. They technically should still be presumed innocent, and they are in that pressure cooker. Certainly, some of them very well could be innocent, so they're in effect almost being tortured. Because until you're there—and I also was told about how stuff is smuggled in on the weekends through Kinder Surprise, and that they don't do that voluntarily; they do that because they don't have a choice.

We have a lot of things to transform—more than I think this bill is tackling today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington now has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thanks to the members from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, Timiskaming-Cochrane, Scarborough-Agincourt and Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry.

I want to draw on the government's comments by the member from Scarborough-Agincourt. I raised up a number of concerns in my debate: the intermittent sentencing, the two thirds of inmates who are waiting long for trials, the coroner's inquest that started today. None of the things that I brought up in my debate were actually responded to by the government. That tells me

that they're not listening, that this is all just a charade and that this is all just a PR exercise by this Liberal government.

They don't care if they solve the problem in the crisis in corrections; they care about getting re-elected. They don't care about the people who have hung themselves in our detention centres; they care about getting re-elected. Just as they don't care about hallway health care; they care about getting re-elected.

Speaker, I said it earlier: This government needs to be withdrawn. It is a danger to the people of Ontario, having a government that doesn't understand its role and doesn't care about the people of Ontario. They are the danger that needs to be fixed in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It has been one of those days here. It very much feels like a Monday here at Queen's Park. But I'm very pleased to be able to bring the concerns of the people of Kitchener-Waterloo with regard to Bill 6, the Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018, which, of course, was reintroduced after the prorogation of this government not that long ago with the change-the-channel public relations exercise here at Queen's Park.

This is a really important piece of legislation, I have to tell you. We have already indicated that there are a number of pieces of this bill that, of course, we will be supporting. Our critic did his one-hour lead on the bill earlier. For some people who have actually taken the time to tour one of our provincial jails—and when you do tour a provincial jail, I have to tell you that that experience stays with you for a very long time.

For those of us who have been engaged in this debate, in this conversation—I've only been here for six years, but I know my colleagues have been here longer, and have continually raised the state of the affairs of our provincial prisons with this government. They have met regularly with correctional officers and medical staff contained within those institutions and they have tried to relay the urgency of the situation in these institutions.

I was very newly elected when I first toured Vanier and Maplehurst in Milton. I have to tell you that Vanier in particular is where I first learned that 60% of the women at Vanier are on remand; they have not had their day in court. Many of them have been there for two years, if not more. Many of them are suffering on a daily basis because they are in complete shock that they are actually in that jail and have not had justice or a due course of action in the justice system. Particularly, that's where I first saw segregation play itself out in all of its harmful manners.

I will never forget one particular woman, who was literally screaming for help for the entire time that I was in this one pod of the Vanier jail. Her voice and her pain—I can't imagine working in that environment, Mr. Speaker. I tell you this story and I share the story with the Legislature because the state of our provincial jails is not a new issue. Our critic raised this in his one-hour lead.

These are not new issues. The correctional officers in this province have continually, for the last decade-plus, come to the Legislature. They've had their lobby day. The politicians have showed up to the breakfast. There have been press releases. There have been rallies, and the state of their working conditions is the state of the living conditions of inmates. Working conditions are the living conditions of the inmates.

Regardless of where you fall on "tough on crime," and even some of the stigmatism and stereotypes of mental health, and new immigrants and refugees in our system—no matter where you are there, in our provincial jails, we have lost our basic humanity, Mr. Speaker. At one level, it's very clear that along the way over these 15 years a conscious decision was made by this government that they were going to leave that system to fall apart, because it was lesser: the people, the human beings, the women and the men who are in those provincial institutions were not worth the energy, the effort, the resources, the care and the legislation.

It took so much political pressure from MPPs in this House to get the reviews put in place. And this is not a government that even pays very close attention to their own reviews, their own studies, their own research or their evidence.

But I think things got so bad once the media—and I want to thank the media publicly, because the Fifth Estate and the media in this province, with the help of some human rights advocates and civil rights advocates, really pushed this government—in particular in the last four or five years, because it's hard to keep track of the rotation of ministers on this file. You could change the minister; the issue still stayed the same. But the media, the Fifth Estate, really put on the pressure. That is the power of the media. We can't do it alone. Unfortunately, in some instances, that's what gets the attention of the government.

I just did a quick review of the headlines from the last 18 months: "Five Corrections Officers Sent to Hospital After Inmate Fight in Latest ..."—this is from the Peterborough Examiner.

"Suicide Attempts Spike Amid Ontario Prison System Overhaul." This was in the Globe and Mail. June 25, 2017: Independent correctional adviser Howard Sapers reveals 2017 figures are far above the yearly average. This has to be issues of violence in our system.

1740

"Correctional Officer Facing Discipline Over Tweets About ..." revealing his working conditions of the jail that he was working in. This was a series of tweets objecting to the living and working conditions at the Central North Correctional Centre, which unfortunately for that officer, who I think displayed a great deal of courage, ended up in a disciplinary action.

January 18, 2018—so just three months ago—this government finally agreed to end solitary confinement for mentally ill inmates.

January 18, 2018: Indigenous prisoners over-represented in prisons across this country and in Ontario.

"Weapons Still Found in Ontario Jails Despite Millions Spent on Body Scanners." This was Toronto City-News, just this past August 22, 2017: "Despite spending millions on high-tech body scanners, weapons are still being found in Ontario jails."

The list goes on. It took two seconds to find these headlines because the media did their best to get into these institutions and show us really what was happening.

Now, PressProgress is an outlet that I pay close attention to. In November 2016, I think things really did come to a head, and I raise these issues because in order to solve the problems that are contained within a system, when they are systemic problems, you actually have to be very up front and honest that the problems exist. For so long, the minister of the time would not admit to it. He would not say in this House that these conditions existed in our institutions, in our prisons.

I think it was Adam Capay's story that really was a tipping point for all of us. I know I kept it on my desk by my computer in my office for 18 months because it was a constant reminder to do the research, to plug in every once in a while to see if anything had changed on the corrections file. The title of this particular article is, "There Is Something Seriously, Seriously Wrong With Ontario's Prison System. Adam Capay's Story of Being Held in Solitary Confinement for Over 1,500 Days Is Only the Tip of the Iceberg." That's the headline. Then it goes on to say:

"How did Ontario's prisons get this messed up?" Of course, it says, "Shock and outrage followed recent headlines detailing the treatment of Adam Capay, a 23-year-old indigenous man who was kept in solitary confinement for over 1,500 days—the United Nations considers anything more than 15 days to be torture."

Once again, the media called out the sickening mistreatment of Adam Capay. The article that's by my desk goes into detail that there wasn't even the decency to have the relief of having light pollution for this young man, for whom the damage, I'm sure, the mental health damage that was done to this young man for four years in solitary confinement—it's actually 1,560 days. I think it's a point of shame for this government, a point of shame for this province. The only thing they would do was put a hood over his head to give him relief from the light. Finally, it was a correctional officer who spoke up. At the time, the Premier said that Capay's treatment was "extremely disturbing," although a member of Wynne's cabinet actually knew Capay was being held in solitary confinement for months."

This is the thing about this place that sometimes I don't quite understand: When you have knowledge of an injustice, when you see it, when you bear witness to it, when you're part of it, Mr. Speaker, you actually have an ethical and moral responsibility to take action. Now, I wouldn't dictate what that action should be. I'm very happy, though, that this correctional officer exposed the situation.

The PressProgress article goes on to say, "In fact, Capay's story is only the latest in a long line of extremely

disturbing stories to emerge from Ontario's prison system....

"Several cases in only the last few years suggest a pattern that raises serious questions about the role of Liberal ministers in a number of problems ranging from prison overcrowding to inadequate health care—not to mention human rights violations.

"In 2013, the ministry of community safety and corrections' own research"—the ministry had this data; it was in the ministry; they had gathered this data—"showed that nearly half of Ontario's jails were overcrowded."

It goes on to say, "Regardless of why they are incarcerated, inmates are human beings and they deserve respect, dignity and humane treatment."

"If that wasn't bad enough, there are many other incidents that suggest Capay's case is only the tip of the iceberg."

This was one of those instances where one case drew attention to a larger systemic issue. Inmates, for instance, at an Ottawa-area detention facility "were forced to sleep on wet shower room floors because there wasn't enough space in regular cells—inmates said they had to towel off the floors before they could lay their mattresses down." Even a basic level of dignity was not honoured in these institutions.

At the time, then-corrections minister Yasir Naqvi "first accused those making the allegations of spreading false information. A short time later, he released a written statement admitting it was true:

"The ministry recently informed my office"—and this is in quotes—"however, that two shower cells in the segregation unit have been used as a last resort" and that there was indefinite segregation.

Bill 6 does address segregation. It's a long time coming, though; a long time coming. We've known for years that segregation is an issue, but the ministry was not gathering this data. They had the data of how overcrowded the prisons were, but the government wasn't keeping track of how many inmates were placed in segregation. We only know of this because the watchdog found "1,677 segregation admissions in just five months of 2015 at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre and the Central East Correctional Centre alone"—1,677. And there were 557 complaints about segregation in provincial jails just in the last three years.

The correctional system is not an easy system to navigate through. Even to have the courage to come forward and raise a complaint about segregation is quite something. Think of the people who didn't feel empowered enough to do so.

This PressProgress article goes on to say, "Noting that solitary confinement can have 'profoundly negative impacts on inmate health and welfare,'" the government was called on "to abolish indefinite inmate segregation, with restrictions on segregation exceeding 15 days and an outright ban on keeping inmates in isolation longer than 60 days."

The John Howard Society has done an incredible job in this province of speaking for those people in the correctional system who have no voice and who have come into that system, in many instances, through no fault of their own. They are waiting for the justice system to become a reality for them.

Everyone knows the story of the lion and the lamb. The justice system is supposed to equalize the playing field. It's supposed to address the levels of power that one person has over another person, and in many instances these are women. I think that's why the tour of the Vanier institute affected me so clearly. Many of the women who were there had been used to further the criminal interest of men, either through trafficking of drugs or trafficking of bodies, and were in abusive relationships where they were powerless. Not only were they victims, but they were being victimized by the very system that was supposed to be addressing that power imbalance.

There's no doubt in my mind that being in that system and having exposure to that pain and that torture would affect you as an individual if you were working in that system. So when I met the local OPSEU members in my constituency office just after Christmas, they talked about the PTSD that they experience as workers. I want to commend the former member who used to sit here, Cheri DiNovo, who first brought this issue to the attention of this House.

1750

We talk about these working conditions being intolerable because the living conditions of the inmates are also intolerable, and there is a weight and there is a price that is paid emotionally, mentally and physically because the violence that exists in our correctional institutions is real. It is real. The government would have to act on it if you gathered that data in a comprehensive manner.

One of the things that happened when I was in Maplehurst is that there was a doctor's office, a medical unit that had been built to help the prisoners access health care in a timely manner. But it was empty, Mr. Speaker. It was empty because the government had never funded the human resources to deliver the human services in this medical facility. I thought to myself, "What a waste." I mean, why build it and not fund it, and would that be acceptable anywhere else?

The John Howard Society has gathered the numbers, because there is a long-term cost to not addressing health issues in our prisons. One, if you saw some of the conditions that have been shared, these are far from hygienic. They are not clean.

"The rate of hepatitis C is 28% compared to 0.8% in the general population." So, in prisons, hepatitis C is up to 28%.

"The rate of HIV is 1.2%, which is 7-10 times higher than the Canadian population.

"The rate of mental health issues are 2-3 times more common than in the general population.

"Individuals die of natural causes 15 years younger than the people living in communities."

And it was found, through research, that many prisons restrict the movement and work of health care professionals on security grounds and that many are too intimidated to speak out despite prisoners' health suffering as a result.

The prisoner advocate Frances Cappe says, "I think it's an incredible embarrassment to our country and to our province, that we can't provide basic medical care to inmates... The entire system needs to be dismantled and reconstructed. That would be my solution—trash the whole system and start again."

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, if you are an individual like myself who actually believes in restorative justice and you spend any time in one of these prisons, you know that there is no justice happening in these walls. If you are an innocent person and you enter the walls of that prison, you will not come out as an innocent person. This becomes the victimization of victims. It is a drain on resources, because those resources are not being allocated in a responsible or ethical manner. And I wish I could say that Bill 6, the Correctional Services Transformation Act, would fix it, but I cannot. I believe that this government also knows this, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's a real honour for me to rise to speak in favour of Bill 6. It's important that this bill be passed for many of the reasons that were expressed today.

I spent a large part of my life working on civil liberties issues, and many of them arise in jails around the world, in Ontario and in Canada. It is with particularly great pleasure that I see that this bill relies on the top expert in the field: It relies on the two reports of Howard Sapers. It's not simply a tinkering of the system; it's an act, a proposed bill, that is based on the top reports, putting forward the best international practice that is available. This is what's important about this bill. I think it was tremendously important to deal with segregation up front, but also to deal with it in a way that was purposeful, that looked to the future and to ensuring that, indeed, we took note of what's going on around the world.

I want to speak a little bit about one of the issues that was raised by many people, about the number of people that are on remand, the number of people that are in provincial jails waiting for their trials. This is a big issue, and it's an issue that is not only dependent on changes to the corrections system. It's an issue that can only be addressed through a wholesale involvement of the justice system. Many of these reforms are already in front of you. I think that changes to the bail system will help in that context, because what we want to ensure is that people are not unnecessarily put in jail while waiting for their trial but, at least, are released on bail with the appropriate support and the appropriate supervision.

The idea of how, indeed, we make sure that we have a more modern, responsive and transparent corrections system is something that we'll have to continue to work on, and this is going to be part of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to make a few comments on Bill 6 and the speech that was just delivered.

My riding has the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, or EMDC, and it has been quite a sore spot in my riding since I was elected, and beforehand. For the last seven years, I've been working on this government to actually fix the situation, with the violence that is occurring daily in the jail. It's not just the inmates who are at risk of being hurt; it's the workers, it's the correctional officers, it's the nurses on staff, and the other staff.

I've had the pleasure to tour the jail numerous times. The first time was back in 2011, after I was elected, and I pushed this government to make some changes, because it's overcrowded and people were sleeping on the floor. There were quite a few blind spots, and people were getting beaten, week in and week out.

It's not that much better today than it was. This government has done very little with that file. In fact, there have been 10 deaths at that jail since 2009—five in the last year. It's ridiculous. It's not the correctional officers' fault. It's the situation that this government has created within the system.

The segregation parts in the jail, to take the violent people away from the general population—at least, violent people who are killing people—they're not using them for that purpose. What they're doing is taking mental health patients out and putting them in the segregation, so they're not getting access to treatment. They're further segregating mental health patients, and the violent criminals who should be taken away from the general population are left in the crowd, and they're still beating people, and they're still demanding that drugs be brought into the jail, and there are deaths occurring. There have to be changes.

This government is a total failure at EMDC. They've had 15 years to make the changes necessary. They have done nothing. The correctional officers, the inmates and their families are fed up with the failure of this government at EMDC and the changes needed. You're throwing in this bill at the last minute. It's terrible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to comment on the speech given by my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo. She did a great job in highlighting what we've already heard and what we already know. The data is there: This government has failed our corrections system.

You think about the system as a whole. Think about a jail. It should theoretically be the safest place on earth for any human being to inhabit—the controls, the systems that are in place, the cameras, the security, the oversight, the control. Yet we see overdoses; we see suicides; we see inmate-on-inmate violence; we see inmate-on-corrections-officer violence; we see a lack of health care, a lack of hygiene. The absurdity of that—that it exists in Ontario in 2018—is indicative of a government that has

failed and has let down the people of the province. That's it.

This is something we've been doing in Canada for over 100 years. There are models around the world that point us in the direction of how it can work well, how we can reduce recidivism rates, how we can ensure the safety and security of persons in those facilities. They've rejected all of those and have taken the lowest-resource approach to maintaining our corrections system and the facilities and supporting the people who work within them.

We have a bill in front of us that takes a small step forward on some of the reforms around segregation and oversight mechanisms, but with a system that is in such a destitute state, it requires a wholesale review and a wholesale amount of priority from this government—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate today.

Certainly, I think the corrections system is one that a lot of people in Ontario don't give an awful lot of thought to unless they're associated with it in some way—if they're an inmate, if they're in correctional services, the brave men and women who staff our institutions. This is the life they lead. This is something they deal with on a regular basis. Most people would probably spend their day not giving an awful lot of thought to what happens within our institutions.

We've got a very positive step being proposed, and that is what you could argue is the largest transformation in the history of corrections that we've ever seen in the province of Ontario. If you're going to do a transformation of that magnitude, Speaker, you have to have new oversight. You have to bring in a comprehensive oversight system. You have to have accountability. You have to build accountability into that system if it's going to function better than it is now.

As I understand it, it would involve the establishment of an independent inspector general who would review, report and issue directions on the treatment of inmates who are within the system today and the conditions in which they're kept—what that confinement actually involves. That was a key recommendation from the Sapers report, when Howard Sapers took a look at some of the things we could do to make our system a better system. This was one of the key conditions and one of the key recommendations that he suggested we avail our-

selves of. That's included in the legislation that's before us today. The inspector general will ensure that the correctional staff themselves and the ministry would comply with the legislation we have before us and with other policies. But we need appropriate oversight if we're going to make these changes.

That's what I like about the bill. It includes that oversight. It makes sure that the changes that are agreed to by a majority of members in this House are adhered to within the system.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener-Waterloo can now reply.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you to the members from Ottawa-Vanier, Elgin-Middlesex-London, Essex and Oakville for their commentary on the 20 minutes that I had to address Bill 6.

This largest transformation in the history of the province—we have heard this since this government prorogued. Everything is now up for the largest transformation in the history of the province, be it health care or long-term care or the environment. Now it's a time and an opportunity to care. I'm not saying that individual members on that side of the House don't care. I know that the member from Ottawa-Vanier has worked her entire career to address issues like this. But systemically, a 15-year record on the state of our prisons in the province of Ontario and the state of the working conditions—for the Minister of Labour to not even mention the poor levels of safety for our corrections officers in our correctional facilities—it needed to be addressed a long time ago.

I'll just leave you with this last quote from the Ottawa Citizen: "Few people realize how dreadful Ontario's jails are. Media access is heavily restricted, making reporting on them very difficult. And even when the stories do come out, inmates don't get much public sympathy—even though most of those in provincial jails haven't been convicted, but are instead housed there while awaiting a bail hearing or trial." That was from Brian Platt, just a year ago, Mr. Speaker.

The work before us is huge for our systems. It would have happened a lot sooner had this government actually acted a lot sooner.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1804.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (IND)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Hon. / L'hon. Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (IND)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Hon. / L'hon. Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Vacant	Parkdale–High Park	
Vacant	St. Paul's	
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Mantha
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Catherine Fife
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Bob Delaney, Catherine Fife
Michael Harris, Monte Kwinter
Michael Mantha, Mario Sergio
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Brad Duguid, Ann Hoggarth
Lisa MacLeod, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Arthur Potts
Yvan Baker, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Sophie Kiwala
Sam Oosterhoff, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Sophie Kiwala
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Brad Duguid, Wayne Gates
Sophie Kiwala, Cristina Martins
Sam Oosterhoff, Randy Pettapiece
Shafiq Qaadri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Amrit Mangat
Jim McDonell, Arthur Potts
Shafiq Qaadri, Ross Romano
Liz Sandals, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Amrit Mangat
Michael Mantha, Deborah Matthews
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
Liz Sandals
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Grant Crack, Joe Dickson
Jennifer K. French, Jack MacLaren
Deborah Matthews, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Lorne Coe, Mike Colle
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Ann Hoggarth, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley